

# Braille Monitor



MAY, 1977

VOICE OF THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND

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# THE BRAILLE MONITOR

MAY 1977

A PUBLICATION OF THE  
NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND



Kenneth Jernigan, President

NATIONAL OFFICE  
218 Randolph Hotel Building  
Fourth and Court Streets  
Des Moines, Iowa 50309

WASHINGTON OFFICE  
Dupont Circle Building, Suite 212  
1346 Connecticut Avenue, NW.  
Washington, D.C. 20036

TREASURER'S OFFICE  
Richard Edlund, Treasurer  
National Federation of the Blind  
Box 11185  
Kansas City, Kansas 66111



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SPEAKING FOR THE BLIND—IT IS THE BLIND SPEAKING FOR THEMSELVES.

## THE BRAILLE MONITOR

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DONALD McCONNELL, *Editor*

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## THE FEDERATION GOES TO WASHINGTON

The halls of Capitol Hill swarmed with blind people the second week of February as over 200 Federationists from 33 states gathered in Washington, D.C. We were in town to greet the new 95th Congress and the Carter Administration, to let them know who we are and that we can speak for ourselves. During that week the spirit of our movement was at its strongest.

Federationists assembled for the first time at a rally and briefing Sunday evening, February 6, at the Burlington Hotel. Four of our five national officers were at the front table as President Jernigan gave greetings and set the tone. He then turned the meeting over to Jim Gashel who discussed the priorities for the week. The basic schedule was to spend the next three days visiting as many Congressmen and Senators as possible, explaining issues of importance to the blind and enlisting their support.

First on the agenda was the reappointment of Andrew S. Adams. This man, the first head of federal rehabilitation programs to be sensitive to the actual needs of the handicapped, was turned out along with the other high officials of the last Administration. Our message was that Andrew Adams is different from the typical federal bureaucrat. His reappointment is vital to continued improvement of programs for the blind at the federal level.

Second on our list was improved Disability Insurance for the Blind, which in this Congress faces its best chance yet for passage. Social Security issues are high on the agenda of the 95th Congress. Once again, the Honorable James A. Burke, chairman

of the Social Security Subcommittee of the Committee on Ways and Means in the House, has introduced the Disability Insurance bill—H.R. 3049. Federationists will recall that Mr. Burke's subcommittee held hearings during the later part of the 94th Congress concerning this bill [see the *Monitor* for August 1976].

Third was a brand-new piece of legislation calling for comprehensive services for the blind [see more about this elsewhere in this issue]. Fourth priority was NAC, which, amazingly enough, still remains on the U.S. Office of Education's list of approved accrediting bodies. With a new Administration and a fresh look at old commitments, we hope to remedy this.

The timing for our activities in Washington could not have been better. The 95th Congress was beginning to settle in after a few weeks of getting organized; the new Administration had just come on board and was already in the process of developing proposals to reorganize the federal bureaucracy—proposals which are bound to affect the lives of blind people. And on Monday, February 7, the Subcommittee on the Handicapped of the Committee on Human Resources in the Senate opened its first hearings for the present Congress with a hearing on Comprehensive Services for the Blind. Thus our week in Washington began.

The Comprehensive Services for the Blind proposal (drafted by the Federation) provides an incentive for states to collect all services for the blind into one unit. It also opens those services to all the blind, the elderly blind as well as families of blind

children, not limiting federal support—as at present—to programs with a vocational goal. The legislation grew out of discussions with Senator Jennings Randolph (a longtime advocate of programs for the blind and chairman of the Subcommittee on the Handicapped). In mid-December, Senator Randolph met with a group of our West Virginia Federationists and heard them talk of the problems engendered by administering programs for the blind through umbrella structures. He was shocked to hear their tales of bureaucratic unresponsiveness, and he asked us to develop and present to his subcommittee “remedial legislation.” He also asked if the West Virginia problems were widespread throughout the country. We assured him that they were, and on February 7 the blind assembled in the hearing chamber to bear witness to this fact.

Half an hour before the appointed time for the opening of the hearing we had filled every chair in the room, including those reserved for the press. We crammed the aisles and lined the walls. The crowd was so large that it spilled over into the hall outside. This hearing, Senator Randolph announced at the end, had a larger attendance than any other ever held by the subcommittee—well over 200. There were witnesses present for other legislative matters under consideration, but they were lost in the sea of Federationists.

Testimony on the bill was given by two panels. The first consisted of consumer representatives from five states, led by Jim Gashel. The second panel was comprised of administrators of state programs, led by President Jernigan as Director of the Iowa Commission for the Blind. At the end, Senator Randolph spoke for the official record, describing the turnout and praising the NFB President as a proven example of

the abilities of blind persons. As the hearing ended, we poured out of the room and dispersed into groups of two or three to keep scheduled appointments with our congressional representatives and to carry the message.

The approach we took varied, but the response we got was almost universally positive. Some of the newly elected representatives knew us from previous contact back home, while some had never heard of the organized blind. Others who have served in previous Congresses remembered us well. It was clear that our earlier visits laid the groundwork. Our presence in the halls of Congress was so apparent that even those Congressmen whom we were not able to visit were clearly aware of us and impressed by our numbers and our ability to negotiate the maze of corridors, tunnels, escalators, and subways which make up the Capitol complex. On several occasions delegations of Federationists were unexpectedly greeted by a curious Member of the Congress who invited them into his office to find out what was going on. So it went through the week.

Our achievements in Washington can be gauged in a number of ways. In the short range, we succeeded in pulling together the broadest possible congressional support for Dr. Adams' reappointment as RSA Commissioner. Nearly 200 Members of the Congress, including the chairmen and ranking members of key committees, have now written letters or made other contacts on his behalf. The Disability Insurance for the Blind bill has now been introduced in both the House and the Senate. In the House nearly 30 Members have introduced bills identical to Mr. Burke's bill, H.R. 3049. In the Senate, Senators Humphrey and Bayh jointly introduced the bill, with the number S. 753.



Other Senators have indicated their desire to co-sponsor.

The Comprehensive Services hearing was a great success. The proposed legislation is now under serious review by the subcommittee staff. In the House, Congressman Marion Snyder of Kentucky has already introduced the Comprehensive Services for the Blind bill. Its number is H.R. 4775.

With respect to NAC, many of the Representatives were shocked to think that one part of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (the Rehabilitation Services Administration) would act wisely in terminating NAC's federal funding, while another part (the Office of Education) would fail to give meaningful consideration to the views of the organized blind and would keep NAC on an approved list. Already the indications are that questions are being asked of the new Commissioner of Education. And so it was ever thus with NAC as the beat goes on.

Over the long pull, efforts such as this one in Washington have tremendous value. For one thing, our presence itself was a visible demonstration of the capacities and competence of the blind to speak for themselves and to engage in the democratic process. Legislators, as members of the general public, have the usual stereotypes of the blind. They are also accustomed to listening to the charitable agencies with their swollen lobbying staffs and to the officials of state agencies whose appointments are sometimes more a sign of their influence in the state's political hierarchy than of their professional competence to serve the blind. But when these Congressmen come face to face with their blind constituents and when they find that those blind constituents are articulate and that

they are knowledgeable about service programs from their own experience, the effect is very great.

This is what the Federation is all about. A new day is arriving in government programs for the blind and we are making it so. As individuals we can be ignored, but when we band together, when we speak with a united and coherent voice and that voice is the representative voice of all the blind jointly and freely determining what is best for them, the traditional barriers of misconception and stereotype fall before us and our voice is heard. For, as President Jernigan has said, "We know who we are, and we will never go back."

Every time we come together to carry out a project such as this we learn more about ourselves and our commitment to the movement. It was gratifying to see the large turnout, with representatives from 33 states. Even more gratifying was the amount of hard work done in three days. Of course, we must always measure what can be done against its cost and our limited financial resources. Our effort in Washington demonstrated that Federationists are willing and prepared to heed the call and meet the challenge. If there were any doubt about this, that doubt was set to rest as scores of Federationists came to Washington at their own expense and once there went on to contribute \$1,300 to meet overhead costs. This in itself shows that we can finance our own movement and do it with pride. In February we went to Washington in greater numbers and with a stronger spirit than ever before and we did so without expense to the national treasury. The moral and philosophical strength of the movement rests in the people who are part of it; and over the long pull, the financial strength will be found there too. □



*The blind show their support for Comprehensive Services for the Blind before the Senate Committee on the Handicapped. At the witness table (from left to right) are: Rami Rabby, Lawrence Marcelino, James Gashel, Richard Edlund, Elizabeth Bowen, and Jacob Freid. (Photo by Martha Holmes)*

## SUCCESS IN THE UNITED AIRLINES NEGOTIATIONS

BY

KENNETH JERNIGAN

In the February issue I gave you an account of the new policy adopted by United and Continental Airlines, restricting the number of "unattended" blind persons who could travel on any given flight. I am pleased to be able to report success in the negotiations with United. Under date of January 31, 1977, I received the following letter from Percy Wood, executive vice president and chief operating officer of United Airlines:

DEAR DR. JERNIGAN: Based on the results of a review by our Medical and Flight Safety

staffs, United's Corporate Policy Committee decided to amend our tariff as it pertains to the carriage of blind passengers. We are filing today to eliminate any restrictions on the number of blind passengers that may fly on a scheduled flight. Should a blind organization desire to charter a flight that would carry predominantly blind passengers, the individual circumstances of that trip would be reviewed by me on a flight-by-flight basis.

Thanks for your interest in this matter, as it got us to review our tariff and the

reasoning that we used in establishing the quota of a maximum of ten blind passengers per flight. A filing of this nature generally takes about 30 days to be reviewed by the CAB [Civil Aeronautics Board] and given any unforeseen problems, the restriction should be lifted around the first of March.

Sincerely,

PERCY A. WOOD.

#### AMERICAN COUNCIL OF THE BLIND ADMITS RECEIVING FUNDS FROM AMERICAN FOUNDATION FOR THE BLIND

For a long time many of us have felt that the American Council of the Blind is not truly an independent organization but a front for the most reactionary of the agencies—particularly the American Foundation for the Blind and its subsidiaries, such as NAC. We have felt that the Foundation has been secretly funding the ACB and calling the shots behind the scenes. The fact that Durward McDaniel was made chairperson of the so-called “Affiliated Leadership League” last summer and that Jansen Noyes, chairman of the AFB Board of Trustees, was made vice-chairperson gave added weight to this view. ACB’s longstanding participation in and support of NAC has been another indicator of how things stand.

However, ACB’s relationship to the American Foundation for the Blind is no longer speculation but provable fact. The Foundation is paying the tab, and the ACB admits it. As we consider our own financial problems and what we have to do, let us also think in terms of how much our independence really means and what freedom is worth. The lead article in the January, 1977, *Braille Forum* (the official publication of

Once again this underlines the importance of the Federation in the lives of blind people. Without the Federation United’s restrictive policy would probably have gone unchallenged. Even if there had been a protest, it would likely have been ineffective. Now, of course, we must turn our attention to Continental. I hope we can achieve the same results there. In any case we will keep at it. We will continue until the last barrier to first-class citizenship for the blind falls. □

the American Council of the Blind) is entitled “*Braille Forum* Expansion: Another Goal Achieved.” It is written by ACB president Floyd Qualls and reads in part:

“When the *Braille Forum* was established as the official organ of the American Council of the Blind, a major objective was to publish it on a monthly basis. Throughout the years, the Board of Publications and the ACB Board of Directors have kept this objective in mind. The membership, assembled in national convention, has directed expansion of the *Braille Forum* be a top priority project of the Council. This directive has not been ignored, and at last, expansion is here.

“On October 28, 1976, Mrs. Mary Ballard, *Braille Forum* editor, and Mr. Durward McDaniel, ACB national representative, were present at a public ceremony in New York City to receive a grant for *Forum* expansion. The grant was awarded by John S. Crowley, president of the American Foundation for the Blind, and Jansen Noyes, Jr., chairman, AFB’s board of trustees. The ceremony was held in the AFB

headquarters. This \$20,000 grant, together with funds provided by the American Council, makes it possible to finance several changes in the output of the *Braille Forum*. We are deeply grateful to the American Foundation for this assistance. It is another demonstration of the Foundation's concern for and interest in the blind of America.

"The first issue of the monthly edition will be January, 1977. Details necessary to publishing the disc edition will hold it up for a while, but hopefully it will be forthcoming in February."

This is what the *Forum* says. These are the ACB president's own words. Whoever controls the dollars can also control the policy. The power of the purse is proverbial and irresistible. If the *Forum* is being financed, how many more dollars may be finding their way (either directly or indirectly) into the ACB treasury? If we had been willing to trim our sails and dance to the agency tune, perhaps we might not have financial problems or need to dig into our own pockets to finance our movement—but we did not trim our sails, nor did we dance to somebody else's tune. We will pay our own way, and we will be stronger for it. We will continue to be the independent voice of the independent blind. □

#### NAC'S ANNUAL INVITATION

##### NATIONAL ACCREDITATION COUNCIL FOR AGENCIES SERVING THE BLIND AND VISUALLY HANDICAPPED,

*New York, New York, January 27, 1977.*

Dr. KENNETH JERNIGAN,  
*President, National Federation of the Blind,  
Des Moines, Iowa.*

DEAR DR. JERNIGAN: As chairman of our Commission on Standards, I am writing to invite the National Federation of the Blind to participate in the revision of standards and evaluation instruments for special schools for the blind and visually handicapped. This project, which also encompasses the development of standards for preschool services for blind children and their families, is just getting under way.

We would welcome constructive input from the Federation on the specific content of these standards as the project committees

prepare and revise drafts of standards before they are put to use in our accreditation program.

We know that you have rejected past invitations to the Federation to join in our standards projects. Nevertheless, we want you to know that we are prepared to work positively with you and your members as we proceed with preparation of updated standards affecting education of blind and visually handicapped children and youth.

We hope you and your members will want to join with us in this important task.

We look forward to hearing from you about this invitation.

Sincerely,

WESLEY D. SPRAGUE,  
*Chairman, Commission on Standards.*

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND,  
*Des Moines, Iowa, February 14, 1977.*

WESLEY D. SPRAGUE,  
*Chairman, Commission on Standards,  
National Accreditation Council  
for Agencies Serving the Blind  
and Visually Handicapped,  
New York, New York.*

DEAR MR. SPRAGUE: I have your letter of January 27, 1977, in which you ask "the National Federation of the Blind to participate in the revision of standards and evaluation instruments for special schools for the blind and visually handicapped." You go on to say that you know that we have "rejected past invitations to . . . join in [your] standards projects" but that you "would welcome constructive input from the Federation on the specific content of these standards."

As I see it, your statement that we have "rejected" those past invitations is not accurate. Certainly its implications and connotations are not. In fact we have never been offered the opportunity to provide meaningful input to the NAC process. This is true despite the fact that I was given a position on the first NAC Board and that we have been offered positions on various study groups and committees. The concept of consumer representation has always seemed to elude NAC's understanding. I know, of

course, that you have blind persons on your board; but this is not what I am talking about, and I doubt that you think it is.

Perhaps you sincerely believe that what you are doing is right, but the vast majority of those of us who are blind sincerely believe that NAC is doing real damage to us as people. If NAC could ever bring itself to come to grips with this issue, the world might be a better place. I suspect, however, that NAC cannot do this—that it simply does not know how and that it will fight on to the bitter end, to its own detriment as well as that of the blind.

As a matter of fact, because of my long experience with NAC's notion of ethics, I do not think that even your letter itself was sincerely written. I believe you felt certain we would not accept the kind of invitation you gave us and that your purpose was to harass—to exploit my answer (or lack of answer) regardless of what it might be. Therefore, you will probably allege that we have "again rejected" NAC's sincere invitation. Be it so, but the recognition of the truth would be a refreshingly pleasant change.

Very truly yours,

KENNETH JERNIGAN,  
*President, National Federation of the Blind.*

□

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S MAILBASKET:  
COMMENTS ON BELT-TIGHTENING

BY

KENNETH JERNIGAN

As might be imagined, our recent announcements concerning financial cutbacks in the Federation have brought numerous and varied responses. The following letters are illustrative. They indicate the soul-searching and reappraisal now taking place among the blind as our movement meets this new challenge. Whether we will emerge stronger and more vigorous or weakened and debilitated will depend upon our sense of the importance of it all and upon the actions we are prepared to take. The movement is ours, and it will be what we make it. The job cannot be done by ten, or a hundred, or even a thousand. It will be done by the blind as a movement—or it will not be done at all. The Federation is now squarely on the line. The blind will determine its fate and its future. We cannot and we need not ask for more:

DEAR DR. JERNIGAN: Enclosed is my check for \$55. In explanation, we have started a support plan here in New Jersey whereby those who do not use checking accounts will send to me an agreed amount each month and at the close of that month I in turn will send those monies on to our national treasury along with the names and amounts of the contributors. We are in hopes this plan will work and may be extended to other chapters across the country.

I send out bills on the last day of the month preceding the due date. Some send their payments around the first and some the latter part of the month.

It is our hope that more persons will join our plan here in New Jersey. We are trying to do our part in this great movement and will strive to do better as days go on.

Sincerely,

JOSEPH WORTHINGTON,  
*President, NFB of New Jersey.*

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DEAR DR. JERNIGAN: My reason for writing is as follows: I was very concerned after listening to Presidential Release #31. In it you discussed in some detail some of the financial problems the National Office is encountering. You say that it is essential that the members of this organization contribute more to make up for the loss of the mailing campaign. I hope you were not serious when you said that the members would have to make up the difference in the loss of the mailing campaign. If blind people had that kind of money, there would be no need for the NFB in the first place. While I agree with you that more contributions would be desirable, I also believe that a little belt-tightening would be in order. For example, I have felt for some time that the *Monitor* has printed articles such as state conventions that need not be included. Since the *Monitor* continues to print these useless articles, and since the NFB is in such financial difficulty, and since you expressed the desire to cut back on the Braille edition as much as possible, and I do not care for the talking book edition because

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it is tone-indexed, I wish to keep my name off of the mailing list. One other place you might cut back on is the Presidential Releases. As you may recall, my big problem with them has been that by the time they are received and played at a chapter meeting, much of the information in them is outdated. You may comment on this if you wish.

Respectfully,

---

DEAR —: Your letter was quite candid. I can do no less than reply in kind. You say that you hope I was not serious in suggesting that the members of the organization would have to make up the money which is being lost as a result of the stopping of the mail campaigns. I was quite serious. I meant exactly and literally what I said.

The National Federation of the Blind is not a cozy little social organization. It is not a group of disconnected local chapters. It is not just a coffee and cake outfit. Above all, it is not a game or a peripheral matter. It is as serious and important as the lives and destinies of us all.

Let me be specific: You tell me that if blind people had the kind of money I am talking about, there would no need for the NFB in the first place. I reply that it is precisely because blind people do not have that kind of money that we must finance our Federation. It is a matter of priorities. Are you, for instance, a member of the Pre-Authorized Check Plan? I haven't checked to see, but your letter would imply that you are not. You may tell me that you can't afford it. I again reply that it is a matter of priorities, of how important you think the organization is, to you and to

your fellow blind. Is it important enough to go without food for a meal, to give up one meal a week, to give up something else which really has meaning to you? If not, perhaps you should examine yourself to see whether you have studied the material enough really to understand what the organization is and what it is doing. I know blind people, for instance, (and some sighted ones too) who are giving more than \$100 per month. Let me hasten to add that these are not rich people.

I know a woman who, when she got her first job, (and it wasn't a very high-paying job at that) began giving \$50 per month. I know a woman in California (in her eighties and in poor health) who is drawing SSI and who has no other income but is giving \$15 per month. She believes the movement is important enough to justify limiting her food and buying fewer clothes and necessities than she would otherwise have. I say once more: it all depends upon your priorities.

Let us talk for a moment about your "belt-tightening" suggestions. You tell me that the *Monitor* prints useless articles such as state conventions. Most of the members tell me they think otherwise. Since they feel that they are part of the total movement, they want to know what is happening in the different states.

I find your statement that you wish to keep your name off the *Monitor* mailing list nothing less than astonishing. One cannot help but wonder how much you really regard yourself as part of the organization. You need to know the information contained in the *Monitor*. The magazine is not written for your convenience or to entertain you. It is written to inform you and to strengthen you in the movement. When

you say that because the recorded issue is not tone-indexed you do not want it, the comment is revealing. It implies that you do not intend to read all of the *Monitor* but only part of it. Your statement about the Presidential Releases is also instructive. If they reach you late in the month they are equally useful for the following month's meeting. Again, they are not meant to entertain you but for a more serious purpose.

The members have a right (perhaps, even an obligation) to hear them. Overwhelmingly the members throughout the country say that they want the Presidential Releases and find them a means of creating organizational oneness and community of purpose. Far from being outdated by a month's delay, the Presidential Releases are thought by many chapters to be valuable enough to form a permanent library for information and reference.

Be all of this as it may, we will have neither Presidential Releases, *Monitor*, nor anything else (including the very Federation itself) if our members do not care enough to fund the organization. The Bible says that where your treasure is, there your heart will be, also. This is true, and the result of the appeal to the blind to fund their own movement will speak for itself. The responses are already beginning to come in sizable numbers.

Please consider what I have said, and see whether you think it has merit. If the Federation does not mean enough for us to make sacrifices for it—real sacrifices—then it is a silly waste of effort, and we would all do better to find something else to do with our time.

Cordially,

KENNETH JERNIGAN,  
*President, National Federation of the Blind.*

*Manchester, New Hampshire,  
January 1, 1977.*

Dr. KENNETH JERNIGAN,  
*Des Moines, Iowa.*

DEAR KEN: Happy New Year to you and your family from all of us in New Hampshire.

I enjoy the Presidential Releases to no end. I know of no other organization which receives Greetings and Messages from their National President. I believe these tape releases weld the NFB together in the most beautiful manner. . . .

Respectfully yours,

EDWARD E. VACHON.

DEAR MR. JERNIGAN: The *Braille Monitor* is an essential tool within our movement; it is the lifeline of communication—that which keeps us informed, inspired, and motivated. If the April issue is being eliminated in the hopes of making members understand the importance of financially supporting the Federation, the innocent will suffer as well as the guilty—in fact, those who believe in supporting the Federation are apt to miss an issue more than those who can't or won't bring themselves to share their resources with us.

The April issue would, like most other issues, bring us up to date on happenings in Congress and would encourage members to plan to attend our National Convention. With full understanding of the economic crunch, it would seem better timing to me if we were to consolidate the July and August issues of the *Monitor* and put out what can be called a Summer Edition. Congress is no longer in session, and the Convention is behind us.



If the Library of Congress were to announce that only those people who absolutely have to have materials in Braille—such as the deaf-blind—would continue to get them if they so notified the Library, I hope that we would take objection. The age of the record-player and the tape recorder has apparently taken control, and we tend to forget that Braille is a means of communication for many—a means which must be used and practiced to be maintained. In addition, some people simply enjoy reading (by themselves) as opposed to listening.

We have had previous communication dealing with this issue, and I feel now as I did then: that it is time for those who receive the *Monitor* to assume the responsibility of its cost. Members in other organizations, social and business groups all pay for newsletters, etc., usually through high dues or the like. When one goes to a newsstand and purchases a magazine, one pays for it. We should establish a flat amount for those wishing to receive the *Monitor*. If someone really cannot afford to pay for it, definitely the individual should continue to receive it, but chapters and state affiliates should be encouraged to help those who cannot afford it. Libraries and other agencies and organizations should continue to receive the *Monitor* with discretion.

Our enemies will continue to try to make things difficult for us, and when they find out that we have to cut back because of their dirty work, it will only encourage them to try harder. No doubt, this is one reason we have to try harder also, but making cuts in our main line of communication just doesn't seem right somehow.

I realize that we must find additional and better ways to raise funds and that members must be responsive not only with

our own resources but with helping to raise those much-needed funds.

With all this said, all I can really tell you is that I will be one very unhappy person if my April *Monitor* doesn't come.

Sincerely yours,

No response necessary.

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NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND,  
*Des Moines, Iowa, February 14, 1977.*

DEAR —: You tell me that your letter requires no response but it does. Apparently you still do not understand what I have been trying to say for so many months. I like Braille as well as the next person. (I should: I read it.) I don't like cutting the April *Monitor* or making any other curtailment, but you almost talk as if we could continue to operate the Federation without cutbacks if I would only do it.

The situation we are in is urgent. If the rank-and-file membership do not change their giving patterns not only will we not publish the April issue of the *Monitor* but the magazine will become a bimonthly or quarterly on a regular basis—and even that will not continue unless we have money. I can only do what we have the resources to do, not one bit more. The cutbacks will not stop with the *Monitor*. They will reach every activity of the movement unless the members act. We are now in the business of determining what the future of the Federation will be. If the sense of urgency is communicated to enough of our people and if the movement is sufficiently important in their lives, then the movement will not only survive but reach greater heights than

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it has ever achieved—and on an absolutely invulnerable basis. If not—then not.

You are, of course, right when you say that we could combine the July and August *Monitors* into a summer issue, but some people might feel as strongly about July as you feel about April—besides all of which, we may (as I have already indicated) go without both.

As you suggest, we could charge a subscription fee for the *Monitor*, but we have always been reluctant to do this—preferring, instead, to depend on voluntary contribu-

tions. The policy may have to be re-examined. I don't mean to sound monotonous or repetitious, but we will only be able to do what we have the money to do.

When all is said and done, you may be right. Perhaps other ways should be found to make cuts. It is all a matter of judgment and of how quickly and how meaningfully the members respond with their money.

Cordially,

KENNETH JERNIGAN,  
*President, National Federation of the Blind.*

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#### COMPREHENSIVE SERVICES FOR THE BLIND: OUR NEW LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVE

The most serious problems plaguing services for the blind across the country have been addressed in a new piece of proposed federal legislation. The Federation-drafted Comprehensive Services for the Blind proposal is now under review by the staff of the Senate Subcommittee on the Handicapped and has been introduced in the House by Representative Marion Snyder of Kentucky as H.R. 4775. The bill provides incentives for states to consolidate the whole range of services to the blind into a single unit and also to open these services to all the blind and their families. A hearing on the bill was held before the Subcommittee on the Handicapped of the Senate Committee on Human Resources on February 7, 1977—a hearing attended by over 200 blind persons (as reported elsewhere in this issue). At that hearing, testimony was presented by two panels of witnesses. One panel, made up of consumer representatives, consisted of James Gashel (representing the NFB), Lawrence

Marcelino (California), Richard Edlund (Kansas), Rami Rabby (Illinois), Jacob Freid (New York), and Elizabeth Bowen (Florida). The other panel, speaking for agencies involved in services to the blind, consisted of President Jernigan (Iowa Commission for the Blind), Burt Risley (Texas Commission for the Blind), A. A. Mallas (president of Management Services Associates of Austin, Texas), Ralph Sanders (Blind Industries and Services of Maryland), Glenn Crawford (Colorado Division of Rehabilitation), and Charles Hoehne (representing the National Council of State Agencies for the Blind).

Since this bill is of such great potential benefit to the blind and since it is likely to occupy our attention for some time to come as it works its way through the Congress, we reprint in full the testimony given by James Gashel which explains the provisions of the legislation in detail. This is followed by excerpts from the testimony of the other witnesses. Now is the time to

begin rallying support for this bill among your Congressmen. Familiarize yourself with this material and then go to work. Your Congressmen can get background and answers to their questions about the legislation from the NFB Washington Office.

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND  
TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE  
ON THE HANDICAPPED

*February 7, 1977.*

Mr. Chairman, my name is James Gashel. My address is Suite 212, Dupont Circle Building, 1346 Connecticut Avenue, Northwest, Washington, D.C. 20036. I am Chief of the Washington Office of the National Federation of the Blind.

Thirty-seven years ago the National Federation of the Blind came into being to give a voice to the nation's blind citizens, now numbering more than 450,000. Through our state affiliates in every state and the District of Columbia and our local chapters which are found in virtually every sizable population area in the United States, we come together through the democratic process of self-organization to consider collectively the problems which we face as blind people and the solutions which are most appropriate.

Our Federation, Mr. Chairman, is the voice of the blind, organized and active. As such we play a distinctive role, representing the hopes and aspirations of blind Americans. People frequently overlook the distinction which must be made between the organized blind and the agencies for the blind. They tend to think if the word "blind" is in the name of the group (or the person representing it is blind), the group (or its representative) is a legitimate spokesman

for the blind. This is not so. A fully representative and open body such as the National Federation of the Blind, where the blind come together to choose their own representatives and make their own policies, is the only kind of legitimate spokesman for the blind in a democratic society. Mr. Chairman, I have gone into some detail about this because in the matter we are discussing today (issues related to comprehensive services for the blind) it is important to understand the various perspectives and who they represent.

The bill providing for comprehensive services for the blind which is under consideration by this subcommittee has the full endorsement of the blind, Mr. Chairman, and our representatives are here in numbers today as a visible demonstration of that fact. We are also pleased and proud that a sizable number of representatives of agencies serving the blind are here to indicate endorsement by the professional administrators of the programs (both public and private) which provide services to blind persons. Several of them appear on the next panel. The broad base of support for this legislation should be evident. Actually it is a product of the collective thinking of the blind and the leading agencies in the field.

Before I turn to the specifics of the bill before the subcommittee today, I want to remind you of some remarks which I made one year ago in the Oversight Hearings. They are relevant. I said this:

"In the area of services to the blind, there is a particular need to expand programs for assisting the older blind. According to the 'Comprehensive Needs Study,' sixty percent of those whose visual loss places them within the range of a functional definition of blindness are age 55 or older.

but these people are virtually unserved by current rehabilitation efforts. Such individuals should have available to them a broad range of services such as home teaching services, orientation and mobility services, personal adjustment services, library services, assistance in obtaining adequate housing, and assistance in identifying and utilizing educational, recreational, and other community resources leading to social participation and breaking out from a life of loneliness and isolation.

"Truly one of the greatest impediments facing the modern multi-service state agency for the blind is the mounds of paperwork and miles of red tape which stand between its qualified professionals and the delivery of services to all clients regardless of age or objective. We believe that a major step forward will be taken in serving all blind persons if the Congress authorizes funds under this act to be expended for provision of a broad range of services to blind persons, and particularly to those who may not reasonably be expected to benefit in terms of a vocational objective.

"This authority should be contained in a separate title of the act. Also, every effort must be made to insure that programs are structured and operated in such a manner that efforts to provide what are essentially independent living rehabilitation services to those blind persons for whom such services are appropriate (particularly the older blind) do not diminish state agency initiatives or responsibility to implement vigorously the traditional vocationally oriented programs."

Mr. Chairman, we were gratified with your obvious interest in pursuing this recommendation which we made in the Oversight Hearings one year ago. The bill providing for a federally supported comprehensive

program of services for the blind which is now before the subcommittee constitutes the legislative approach which we would like the Congress to adopt.

Section 1 sets forth the purpose of this act which in general is to authorize grants to the states to assist them in planning a more comprehensive program of services for the blind, to provide such services, to evaluate visual loss, and to develop new or improved techniques for providing services for the blind.

Section 2 authorizes appropriations for this act as follows: for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1977, \$15,000,000; for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1978, \$25,000,000; and for each succeeding fiscal year such sums as the Congress may later authorize.

Section 3 provides for the allotment of the funds authorized in this act to the states and uses a formula which is identical to that used in the vocational rehabilitation program. This section also assures that each state which is eligible to receive funds under this act will be entitled to no less than \$50,000 in any one fiscal year. It is also provided that the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare may utilize up to ten percentum of the funds authorized in this act for support of projects of special national significance in carrying out the purposes.

Section 4 sets forth the state plan requirements. Subsection (a)(1) requires that each state wishing to participate in this program must designate the state blind commission or another agency which administers the vocational rehabilitation program for the blind to administer this program of comprehensive services. In the event that an agency

other than the state blind commission is so designated, the state would have to insure that such agency contains "an identifiable administrative unit" which administers the vocational rehabilitation and comprehensive services for the blind programs, that such organizational unit is at a level comparable to that of other major departments within such agency, that its director is directly responsible to the chief administrative officer of such agency, and that it develops and administers its own budget. Other provisions of section 4 assure that the program of comprehensive services for the blind will be coordinated with other major programs such as education of the handicapped, vocational rehabilitation, and social services. In addition, section 4 contains the necessary authority for making regulations along with certain reporting requirements. It is important to note that the states are specifically prohibited from imposing either age or residency requirements on clients who apply for services under this act.

Section 5 covers the matter of payments to states. The basic 80%/20% matching ratio arrangement (the same as is contained in the vocational rehabilitation program) is used under this act.

Section 6 sets forth certain essential definitions. The more important ones are: (1) A blind person is a person who is determined to be blind under state law. (2) The term "services to the blind" includes but is not limited to prevention of blindness services; provision of eyeglasses and other visual aids and mobility and self-help aids; adjustment services, such as mobility training and Braille instruction; activities of daily living and other rehabilitation teaching services; individual and family counseling; supportive services such as guide services, reader services, information and referral services,

follow-along services, and transportation services necessary to assure delivery of services; the establishment and maintenance of a register of the blind; the establishment and maintenance of material and textbook centers and the distribution of their contents, such as talking book machines, cassette tape players, brailled and large-print books, special aids such as needles and Braille typewriters, talking books and tapes; and the warehousing, sale, and distribution of aids, appliances, and devices used by blind persons.

Section 7 requires the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare to establish in his Department (or in any agency which may at a later date administer the vocational rehabilitation program) the Division for the Blind. This Division is to be the principle agency in the federal government for carrying out the administration of vocational rehabilitation and other rehabilitation programs for the blind authorized in this act.

Section 8 is the nonduplication provision which insures that in determining the amount of any state's federal share of federal expenditures for planning, administration, and services incurred by it under this act there shall be disregarded any portion of such expenditures which are financed by federal funds provided by any other provision of law and the amount of any non-federal funds required to be expended as a condition of receipt of such federal funds.

Mr. Chairman, this bill is needed now if we are to develop and preserve quality services for the blind on a national basis. The "Comprehensive Needs Study," mandated by the Congress in the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, underscores the need. In many states and localities the majority of blind people receive little in the way of meaningful or

relevant assistance. Blindness is a unique disability surrounded by countless myths and misconceptions. The typical social service agency is ill-equipped (or, more accurately, not equipped at all) to help the blind, and the typical social worker is a product of the general public view of the blind which sees us as mostly dependent and nothing short of helpless. Certainly such agencies and the professionals who staff them are not well suited to assist the blind, particularly those blind persons who are in the midst of their own personal adjustment.

About the only advice offered to the blind who become clients of the general service agency is to get a talking book machine and read recorded books to pass the time of day. There is often little, if any, encouragement to learn independent mobility and certainly not the skill to teach it. If the client is referred for vocational rehabilitation, where some specific training in techniques might be available, the answer may well be, "You are not eligible—no vocational objective, and no money for any other kind of service."

This bill is aimed at overcoming the typical situation which I have just described. The funds available to the states under this act would complement and supplement the vocational rehabilitation program which has been of benefit to thousands, but which still fails to reach thousands more. If this bill is adopted, the blind who are not now eligible for service by a special program for the blind should have a greater chance to lead more satisfying lives of self-sufficiency and independence.

Mr. Chairman, I want to emphasize the importance of the services we are talking about providing to people through this

legislation. These are special services needed because of blindness. They are not general social services. They are services such as prevention of blindness, including outreach and visual screening; provision of special aids; adjustment-to-blindness services such as mobility training and Braille instruction; rehabilitation teaching—that is, instruction in special skills and activities of daily living; individual and family counseling; guide services; reader services; information and referral services; and library services, including the establishment and maintenance of materials, equipment, and textbook centers and the distribution of their contents such as talking book machines, cassette tape players, Braille and large-print books, special aids such as needles and Braille typewriters, talking books, and tapes. Clearly, these are unique services which are not now provided (or are poorly provided) in most parts of the country given the present funding and organizational structures.

While this bill does provide the opportunity for the states to offer a broader array of meaningful services to all blind persons, it has the additional advantage of meshing with already existing state-federal initiatives. Section 3 (State Plan Requirements) has a heavy emphasis on coordination of programs. The requirement that the "comprehensive services for the blind" must be administered by the same agency in charge of the vocational rehabilitation program for the blind is fundamental since many of the services listed in the proposed act are intimately associated with rehabilitation. For this reason it is our hope (and we think it should be expressed as the congressional intent in passing this bill) that the new services authorized in this act can be regarded as an extension of the vocational rehabilitation program for the blind, with the paper work and regulatory requirements being

kept to a minimum, and the emphasis being placed on service. We know that when new programs are added, the red tape usually expands, but we feel that this can be avoided in the case of this legislation since agencies and procedures are already in place.

With regard to the issue of coordination, this bill addresses it by recognizing that services for the blind are best provided as a total package and it encourages the states to organize their system for delivering services to the blind along such lines. The umbrella structures for administering to "human service" programs which now exist in many states have resulted in a fragmentation of programs for the blind in every case. Unfortunately, these administrative arrangements tend to focus on numbers, not needs. Rehabilitation is seen as rehabilitation—never mind that there are substantive differences in the respective client populations. Library service is library service—never mind that library service for the blind is quite unlike library service for the sighted and requires special consideration and know-how along with a belief in the competency and normality of the blind and a commitment to preserve and defend it.

The blind person who must hunt his way through the bureaucratic maze to find someone who understands his problem becomes frustrated. Doors are closed, programs are limited to rigidly prescribed eligibility requirements, and if you don't fit in, it's "too bad." This, Mr. Chairman, is the experience which too many blind people face. Particularly the older blind population (a majority, according to the "Comprehensive Needs Study") and the children and their parents (who should be picked up and given counseling even before the formal vocational rehabilitation process can begin) would benefit from your affirmative action on this bill.

There would be one agency to go to for a comprehensive set of services. Accountability would be strengthened because if that agency did not perform, if it was not doing its job, the blind and their friends could make this known to those responsible, including the governor and the legislature. The buck could not be passed to someone else because responsibility would be focused in one unit of government. The data reveals (and this will be documented in later testimony this morning) that where programs are organized in this manner, the services for the blind are better in every case.

The establishment of the Division for the Blind at the federal level in the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (or any other agency which may later administer the vocational rehabilitation program) would be an example to the states. We envision it as a coordinating point with program responsibility for vocational rehabilitation and the other rehabilitation services which are authorized in this act. Particularly it should facilitate the smooth administration of these programs at the federal level and insure that the new services are made a part of the present efforts without burdensome reporting requirements, statistical time studies, and the like. This can be done.

Some may ask, "Why the blind?" "After all," the argument proceeds, "other handicapped people deserve good service, and don't you think they should have it?" The answer to the second question is "yes," and to the first, it is another question, "Why not the blind?" The field of work with the blind as a distinct discipline has existed as a matter of longstanding tradition in this country and abroad. The unique nature of the disability of blindness causes it to stand apart from other kinds of physical impairments. In some respects blindness is not so

severe physically as some other disabling conditions, but even so, there is clearly a unique set of techniques (such as Braille, mobility, and so forth) which must be taught by specialized personnel. In many respects the handicap of blindness has a greater social impact on the individual than do most other disabilities. Blindness conjures up all kinds of ancient myths and misconceptions. The "Comprehensive Needs Study" pointed out that according to a recent survey, people feared blindness most next to cancer.

For these reasons and due to the fact that the blind are a small minority among persons having physical disabilities, the service delivery system must be designed so as to maximize the opportunity for relevant services and minimize the blurring of distinctions. This is best done if those who provide assistance to the blind have such work as their only charge. We do support the concept of good programs for other disabled people, and nothing in this proposed legislation is inconsistent with that objective. Previously, this subcommittee and the Congress have been able to maintain the distinctions between disability groups. The vocational rehabilitation program itself is one example, where the states are given the option of having one agency to administer the general vocational rehabilitation program and one to administer the program for the blind. All we are asking is that the same kind of reasoning be applied in passing this legislation.

To summarize, Mr. Chairman, the combined effect of the Comprehensive Services for the Blind Act is to encourage and enable the states to offer a broader range of needed services to the blind as a necessary supplement to the vocational rehabilitation program for the blind, provided that such

services are administered together with other major programs for the blind through single state agencies or other major organizational units of state government. We think this is a rational approach to solving two of the most pressing problems confronting programs for the blind. The appropriations which would be authorized are not budget-busting in any sense of the word. The bill constitutes a good step in the right direction. It has broad support among the blind and the leading agencies for the blind. The National Federation of the Blind, therefore, urges your swift and affirmative action.

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The testimony of the other witnesses explained and supported the various aspects of the legislation. The present trend of mindless conglomeration of services into umbrella agencies was explored. As President Jernigan testified:

"If, for instance, a state has a supervisor of highway construction, a supervisor of elementary education, a supervisor of pest control, and a supervisor of health and accident insurance, it does not follow that integration and coordination are achieved by creating a department of supervisors and lumping all of these people and functions together. Nor is any real integration or coordination achieved by establishing in a state a department of health and highways. Health is one function, and highways another, and they cannot meaningfully be integrated. If such a department is established, all that can be accomplished is to superimpose an administrative hierarchy on the two departments, which will still remain separate functions—whether they be called departments, divisions, bureaus, or what not. In fact, the administrative hierarchy will be detrimental and will cause inefficiency in such a situation."

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This statement by President Jernigan was supported by the testimony of Bob Mallas, reporting on the results of his exhaustive eighteen-month study of programs for the blind in every state of the nation. As he testified:

"The study's conclusions are grim. Four states have superior programs. (By superior, we mean unusually effective, dynamic, vital, better funded, and with better staff resources. Especially impressive is the quality of their leadership.) Eight have good programs. (By good, we mean the programs are generally effective, but contain elements of weakness that could become more and more serious.) The balance of the states grade off sharply down to very weak programs (12 states are in that category). All of the states with superior programs have separate status with direct access to the governor and/or legislature of that state. This is a significant key to their programs and funding strength."

Dr. Mallas' testimony also set forth the major (and revolutionary) conclusion of his study: "The study uncovers a new principle of public administration which is constantly being violated in our structuring of human resource delivery systems. This principle is the myth of economy of scale when it is applied to human resource programs. The concept has merit when applied to some functions of government, e.g., tax collection, garbage collection, sewage disposal, water cleaning, etc. Regretfully, there has been a tendency to 'blanket the concept' across all governmental functions with the assumption that it will work equally well in all situations. It does not! The functions of government that relate to the problems of people especially do not. The study details why it does not."

An example of the extreme effects of the umbrella structure was given by Lawrence Marcelino. Services to the blind in his state of California are placed three administrative levels away from the governor:

"All of the efforts of the organized blind to bring about improvements in the program as administered by the Department of Rehabilitation have failed. Numerous times we have sought the intervention of the Secretary of the umbrella agency but our efforts have thus far been to no avail. . . . There are in that huge umbrella 50,000 employees and it spends nine billion dollars in state, federal, and county funds. From the foregoing it is obvious that it is physically impossible for the head of such a huge umbrella agency to keep abreast and to be close enough to the operations of a rehabilitation program for the blind to make it responsive to the needs of the blind."

Other witnesses supported the point that additional confusion in the field is caused by the spreading of services for the blind throughout a variety of agencies whose major focus is not the blind. Rami Rabby, speaking from his experience as a management expert, put the matter into perspective:

"Over the years, I have become convinced by my experience both as a management consultant and as an advocate for rehabilitation services that services to people, whether they are the employees of a company or the clients of a rehabilitation agency, must be global in nature and that an overly narrow or uni-dimensional focus on them can only result in administrative inefficiency, diluted service, and misspent dollars."

The results of fragmentation in practice were set forth by Ralph Sanders, speaking

of his agency, Blind Industries and Services of Maryland (BISM):

"[T]he vending facilities program in Maryland is operated with a split licensing authority. As mandated under the federal Randolph-Sheppard Act, the vocational rehabilitation agency . . . is the licensing agency for managers in facilities located on federal property. Under Maryland law, BISM is the licensing agency for managers of facilities located on state, county, municipal, and private locations. Under the Maryland plan, BISM serves as the nominee agency providing day-to-day management for the vending facility program located on federal property."

Richard Edlund described the effects of fragmentation on library services in Kansas: "Kansas now contracts with the state of Oklahoma to send Braille books to the blind persons in the state of Kansas who request them. When requesting a book from out of state, it takes from three to six months to get the book that you want, if it's available. There are important provisions in this bill to make monies available for the library to become more responsive. Another thing that would make the library more responsive would be if it were a part of Services to the Blind within the state. Presently it is completely and totally separate from Services to the Blind. Textbooks for blind students . . . are available only through the school for the blind. That falls under a separate agency—the Board of Regents. It, like the library, also has no direct connection or responsibility to Services to the Blind."

President Jernigan reported on the situation in Iowa, where real attempts have been made to gather these services into one unit, as well as to extend services beyond the

limit of employment-directed programs, to cover other needs as well:

"In our state we try to take a more comprehensive approach by getting services to people according to their needs; not plugging them into a program or rejecting them because some federal regulation says we can't spend federal money in that particular case. If we can't spend federal money there, we try to find another source, but I am here to tell you that it isn't easy to operate that way. Fortunately in Iowa we have a mobilized blind population and a general public which strongly support our programs. The programs are well known and identifiable. The legislature has usually been good to us, and we have tried to keep faith by giving service and showing results. Even so, it is an administrative nightmare sometimes to try to work in a patchwork system of funding and different reporting requirements."

Glenn Crawford, head of the general rehabilitation agency in Colorado, talked about some areas of need which are unmet altogether by vocational rehabilitation programs:

"The need for an expansion of service programs for the severely visually impaired is emphasized for this older population [over age 65]. If it should be possible, they would currently be served through the vocational rehabilitation programs; however, age and ability to engage in employment activity greatly diminishes with time, making this impossible. Further, it is strongly recommended that a service program for children and youth be funded at the federal level. These persons currently are not eligible for state-federal vocational rehabilitation programs, again because of the work criteria. . . . Special services currently available within

service units for the visually impaired could be of benefit to this young population and the parents of blind children. In working with the parents of blind children, services can begin at the earliest possible age and would prevent the compounding of side effects of this disability. Through the provision of these services as a prevention technique, it precludes the need for major and extensive service program activities at a later age simply for relearning activities."

The needs of the families of blind persons were emphasized by the testimony of Beth Bowen:

"[A] problem germane to both blind children and newly blinded adults is the attitude of their family toward their blindness. With a good program of family counseling, many of the psychological barriers faced by some blind persons could be alleviated and their rehabilitation made easier. In Florida, the responsibility for family counseling is that of the social worker. In my area of the state, we have one social worker who, at present has a caseload of over 500 clients. With her other duties, and such a large caseload, very little, if any, family counseling can be provided. Our organization attempts to fill the gap whenever possible, but unfortunately, we only skim the surface of what needs to be done."

Two other witnesses broadened the support for comprehensive services—Burt Risley and Charles Hoehne. Mr. Risley, the Director of the Texas Commission for the Blind, is also a member of the Planning and Advisory Council of the White House Conference on Handicapped Individuals. Speaking as a member of this Council, Mr. Risley had the following to say:

"What handicapped individuals are saying at regional and state meetings held in con-

nection with the White House Conference on Handicapped Individuals is that they want and need more than vocational rehabilitation services; that they are concerned about and need meaningful and remunerative employment, but that they also want and need meaning and quality in their daily lives; and that there are numerous handicapped individuals who—because they are too old, too young, too catastrophically handicapped, or in circumstances which make immediate entry into the job market impractical—find themselves effectively excluded from eligibility for services under the state-federal program of rehabilitation."

Charles Hoehne, representing the National Council of State Agencies for the Blind, continued this theme and pointed out the need for federal action:

"[H]ow then are administrators of state agencies for the blind to make [comprehensive services] happen for blind individuals in the various states? The answer, Mr. Chairman, is that we cannot. We have tried long and hard to tap into all of these other federally supported programs in order to bring more comprehensive services to larger numbers of blind citizens throughout this country. The effort has not been successful. The administrative complexities and costs of the effort are disproportionate to the limited number of additional service benefits we have been able to stimulate for the people we want to serve better than what we currently are able to do with what we have to work with."

Finally, we reprint the conclusion of the testimony of Jacob Freid, Director of the Jewish Braille Institute of America, who reminds us of the ultimate purpose of this and all of the legislation supported by the organized blind.

"Legislative programs determined in partnerships with the blind so that they are effectively targetted to meet the needs of the blind will make it possible for the blind to lead normal lives that give fulfillment to talents, aspirations, and per-

sonality. Let this be done and the blind will attain through their own merits, education, training, and abilities the equality, security, and that pursuit of happiness for all of us that is the glory of our democratic heritage." □

### TONY MANNINO: MAN OF INTEGRITY

BY

KENNETH JERNIGAN

Tony Mannino held a special place in our hearts and our movement. He was both a leader and a symbol. To me personally he was warm friend, perceptive colleague, political ally, and brother.

The casual observer (at least, at first glance) might have thought Tony a man of contradictions. Not so. The pattern ran deep, and the lines were straight and true. When I think of Tony, I call to mind a verse by John Hay written in the frontier doggerel of the last century. My memory of it is not exact, but the paraphrase catches the spirit. It goes something to this effect:

*A blunt-spoke man in his speech was Tony,  
And an awkward hand in a row,  
But he never shirked, and he never lied—  
I reckon he never knowed how.*

And he didn't. He never asked others to do what he was unwilling to do himself, and his integrity was absolute. With sufficient provocation he might tell you to go to hell, but if he did, you could be totally certain about one thing: He meant it. Every single word of it. Not maybe or perhaps, but every word.

Tony was not a great scholar, but he was extremely literate. His prose was sparse to

the point of terseness. In that very quality it almost achieved elegance. In a 1969 memo to California chapter presidents, for instance, he got to fundamentals in a single sentence. He was reporting a precedent-setting court victory establishing the rights of blind aid recipients. There might have been paragraphs and pages about human dignity and the triumph of good over evil, poetic flights about the valor of the underprivileged in conflict with the forces of power and wealth. But there was only this: "Chalk up another victory for justice, fair play, and food for those who need it most." What else was there to say! If you had fair play and food, you also had justice—and the rest would take care of itself.

Tony was equally to the point in his correspondence with the President of the National Federation of the Blind. I remember a letter he wrote me some years ago containing a request which I suspect he thought I might not grant. He ended it this way: "If I am not satisfied with what you send, I will surely let you know."

On another occasion he wrote to me like this: "Since we already went through the procedure of chiding each other regarding this item last year, we can assume that you will be telling me I should be ashamed of

myself for asking, and I will be telling you that this is the least you can do for the Chairman of the National Federation of the Blind White Cane Week Committee. I shall be awaiting a most favorable reply to this urgent request."

As you will gather, we were dealing with an expenditure, which Tony thought I should authorize and which I thought I should not. His persistence paid off, and I did it. He got his "favorable reply," and he should have got it.

His California intimates called him "fearless leader," and the term was a two-word character sketch. It gave recognition to his capacity and willingness to settle the hash of opponents, and it said other things: that he felt responsible for standing in front—especially when the fight was tough, the enemy mean, and the odds unfavorable. He was almost patriarchal in his concept of duty. He had been elected to leadership by the blind of California, and it was his responsibility to do it—to see that those who had trusted him did not get hurt, regardless of the cost to him personally. He was probably the closest thing we had in the Federation to a political "boss," the Mayor Daley of the movement—but a Mayor Daley without jobs to give or police to command. Tony's power rested on the respect of his colleagues and their belief that he meant what he said and could make it stick—that his leadership meant progress and better lives for the blind. Yes, there was a hint of iron and retribution in the term "fearless leader," but there was more in it of comradeship and love. He belonged to the blind (not just the blind of California but the nation). He was theirs. They knew it, and he knew it. It was the bond of his faith, the source of his strength, and the root of his understanding. The blind loved him. They also believed in him and trusted him.

I first met Tony in the 1950's. We both arrived in California in the same year, 1953. He was born in western New York in 1907. From childhood he was severely nearsighted, but this did not prevent his achieving high scholastic averages. After high school he attended North Central College in Illinois, graduating with a B.A. degree. By this time his eyesight was much worse, and he began to face the job discrimination which has been the traditional lot of the blind.

Returning to his hometown, Tony took a job as shipping clerk with a large tool company engaged in foreign fiber imports, and sales and manufacture of brooms, brushes, and novelty items. He remained with the company for seventeen years, the last seven as superintendent. In 1953 he moved to Los Angeles where his mother, two brothers, and four of his five sisters had already established residence.

In California he looked for employment, but that was 1953, and the old attitudes were still largely unchallenged. Much of the work of the organized blind movement was still to be done. "I found that no one wanted me and no one wanted my people," he told the *Los Angeles Times* in an interview published many years later. "The employment office said the best they could do was get me a job going from door to door selling brooms."

Tony turned this rejection into triumph. He might have become bitter; he might have settled down to idleness and defeat; he might have shrugged and called it fate—but he did none of these things. He had the vision to see that equality for the blind could only be achieved by hard work and organized action on the part of the blind themselves. He also recognized that the struggle would be long and the progress

gradual and that he and others like him who would lay the foundation and do the pioneering would not be the ones to reap the full harvest. That would have to wait for at least another generation.

Tony joined the local Federation affiliate, the Los Angeles County Club of Adult Blind, which later became the Active Blind, Inc. Soon he became president. His energy and dedication quickly brought other positions of leadership. In 1960 he became Executive Director of the American Brotherhood for the Blind, and in 1964 he was appointed White Cane Committee Chairman of the National Federation of the Blind. He continued in both positions until his death. In 1967 he became president of the National Federation of the Blind of California, being re-elected to that office for successive two-year terms until he became executive secretary of the organization.

All of these facts and the statistics do not catch the flavor or tell the story of Tony's contributions to the blind or indicate the part he played in our movement or the place he held in the affections of its members. He labored mightily. He was greatly loved. He will be greatly missed.

Speaking personally, I can say that I relied heavily upon his political advice and his judgment of people. Even more I relied upon his intuitive understanding and his absolute loyalty and devotion. Repeatedly I asked him to serve as Chairman of the Nominating Committee at National Conventions and called on him to fill other assignments of honor and trust. He always got his work done with efficiency, without fanfare, and on time.

Tony was fortunate in his family. His sister Mary worked as devotedly in the

movement as he, and her competence and loyalty were a source of continuing strength to him—to us all. And his wife Frances was the perfect complement to his personality and needs. Quiet, competent, supportive, and strong, she renewed and comforted. He felt that he was especially blessed in his choice of a wife, and he was right. I did not know the other members of his family, but I have heard him talk of them, and the closeness of the tie came through in all that he said.

As we total the score and tally the record, how shall we measure this man, who was our colleague and brother? His life (particularly, the last bit of it) mirrors the present state of our movement—growing triumphs, hostile reaction of opponents, and battles still to be fought before final freedom. Tony was a dedicated man, one who would not run from a fight; but he was also a sensitive man, one who preferred peace. The vicious campaign of slander and vilification waged in recent months by one newspaper and a small group of disgruntled power-seekers caused him more pain and sorrow than many realized. It may well have contributed to his death. He cared deeply, and it was not easy to see his integrity (the very central quality of his being) repeatedly aspersed in the public press.

But, of course, there was the other side of the coin. The overwhelming majority of the blind of the state knew him, loved him, and rallied to him. When he died in September of this year, he left the organized blind movement stronger than when he joined it, better for his participation and grateful for his being. He gave emphasis to the best in all of us. He built strongly and well for the future. California stands more proudly in the movement today because of his work, and the blind of the nation will not forget

him as they go to meet their destiny of equality and first-class status in society.

Tony, our comrade and our brother, rest well. Those who attacked you for advocating our rights will be laid low. We will see

to that. And the blind will march on to that freedom and opportunity of which you dreamed and for which you worked. It is a promise and a commitment. We will do it, and no force on earth shall stay our progress. □

## NEBRASKA LIBRARY DISPUTE CONTINUES

Over a year ago the blind of Nebraska, reacting to the poor library services being provided to them by the Nebraska State Library Commission, introduced legislation to transfer these services to the Division of Rehabilitation Services for the Visually Impaired, which provides most other services to the blind in the state. The article "Blind of Nebraska Try for Better Library Services," in the May 1976 *Monitor* reported the progress of this legislation in the session of the Nebraska Legislature just ended. The Library Commission vigorously resisted the proposed move, even implying (in a lobbying release illegally sent to those on the library mailing list) that the move would contribute to "separating and dividing our people" and to "creating dehumanizing procedures that destroy the human spirit."

The March-April 1977 issue of the *Monitor* printed the testimony of Florence Grannis Shropshire, which she presented to the Nebraska Legislature in support of the transfer.

Now the newly-appointed head of the State Library Commission, apparently feeling that the issue can be resolved by alerting the library profession nationally and carrying on the campaign at the same low ethical level practiced inside the state by his predecessor, has submitted a report which was printed in the January 15, 1977, issue of *Library Journal*. This report is reprinted

below, followed by an answering letter of protest sent to the *Journal's* editor by Barbara Beach, president of the NFB of Nebraska.

### "LIBRARY-BASED BLIND SERVICE FOUGHT BY NATIONAL BLIND GROUP

"John Kopischke of the Nebraska Library Commission reports that the National Federation of the Blind is conducting a high-powered campaign aimed at removing from the jurisdiction of state libraries their responsibility for running service-to-the-blind programs; even the Library of Congress is under fire. But the NFB, says Kopischke, failed in its effort to get the Nebraska legislature to move the statewide service for the blind and physically handicapped out of the state library and into another agency, the Department of Public Institutions' Rehabilitation Service for the Visually Impaired.

"The Federation had attempted to discredit the Nebraska state library, and charged that state library service to the blind was 'grossly inadequate and characterized by insensitivity.' After conducting a massive letter campaign, the 'highly vocal' NFB got one legislator to back a bill proposing that the program be transferred from the state library to an agency it felt to be more in tune with the needs of the

blind. But the legislature didn't go along with cutting off the state library immediately, and decided to conduct first an investigation to evaluate the state library's handling of service to the blind. The result: the legislative committee that conducted an eight-month investigation into NFB complaints decided that the state library was the best agency for the job and most complaints were unfounded.

"The NFB, says Kopischke, contends that agencies providing social services to the blind 'have the best understanding and commitment to the blind'; they're often staffed by blind people. But the Nebraska state library held that it can provide the best service, not only to the blind, but to the physically handicapped as well.

"Kopischke reported that state libraries elsewhere (Washington and Montana were two states mentioned) as well as LC [Library of Congress] are being assailed by the NFB. Interestingly, LC had just awarded a \$150,000 contract to the American Foundation for the Blind to determine how many blind and physically handicapped individuals are not making use of Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped services because they are unaware of the free reading service. The study will also peg the reading needs and preferences of those surveyed. The study will be completed by in late 1977 and is 'expected to have far-reaching effects on the planning and operations of DBPH.'"

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*Monitor* readers will note and may wonder about the \$150,000 Library of Congress grant to the AFB when the Books for the Blind Program is so under-funded. We might point out that the AFB has vast resources of its own which could be devoted to this

kind of research project. And such projects would be a more proper use of the Foundation's funds than the sponsoring of dissension in the field of work with the blind, as at present. Here, then, is Mrs. Beach's reply:

"DEAR EDITOR: Your January issue carries an item purporting to be news from John Kopischke, executive director of the Nebraska Library Commission. That 'news' item contains a number of significant omissions, errors, and half-truths which a library journal would surely wish to have corrected in the interests of accuracy. In addition, the tone of the language adopted to describe the actions of the National Federation of the Blind pictures that organization of blind persons as an unthinking assailant of all libraries for the blind regardless of the quality of service provided.

"Let me begin by citing the most glaring error and significant omission contained in the news item. I refer to the following: 'After conducting a massive letter campaign, the "highly vocal" NFB got one legislator to back a bill proposing that the program be transferred from the state library to an agency it felt to be more in tune with the needs of the blind.' Any reader reading this sentence would conclude that the 'massive letter campaign' resulted in securing the support of only one state senator. In fact, Senator Gerald R. Koch, who introduced the proposal into Nebraska's Unicameral, was contacted by a member of the NFB of Nebraska and agreed to introduce the measure. Subsequent to that, letters were written by members of the NFB and others urging the adoption of the proposal, a very common and legitimate legislative strategy. But Mr. Kopischke's report is much more misleading by a significant omission at this point. He neglects to mention that shortly after the introduction of the legislation, his

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predecessor (Ms. Jane Geske) had permitted the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped to commit the following illegal acts: (1) send to all subscribers a letter urging opposition to the bill and suggesting they write to their state senator; (2) permitted this political lobbying letter to be sent out under the franking privilege and, moreover, failed to comply with the type-size standards required for mailings of this kind; (3) allowed a voluntary association, namely, the Nebraska Library Association Special and Institutional Library Section, use of the franking privilege and mailing list to circulate this lobbying letter; and (4) refused permission to the NFB of Nebraska, another voluntary association, an opportunity to respond to the lobbying letter by means of the same privilege and facilities. There was indeed a massive letter campaign, but as the above facts show, it was fostered, facilitated, stimulated, and in part, paid for by public funds allocated for the purpose of providing library services to the blind. Granted, all this occurred before Mr. Kopischke became director of the Nebraska Library Commission, but since he is making the report, it is incumbent upon him to strive for some accuracy unless his purpose was simply to make a declaration of war on a group of consumers with whom he ought to be working to achieve the quality of services which he believes the Nebraska Library Commission can provide to the blind and physically handicapped. Mr. Kopischke, incidentally, identifies only the NFB. While the NFB initiated the proposal, it was endorsed by *every* other organization of the blind in Nebraska.

"Consider the following sentence: 'The NFB, says Kopischke, contends that agencies providing social services to the blind "have the best understanding and commitment to the blind"; they're often staffed

by blind people.' The implication of the sequence, "'have the best understanding and commitment to the blind'" and 'they're often staffed by blind people' is that having blind staff creates the understanding and commitment to the blind. Anyone who believed that blindness per se carried understanding and commitment with it would be misinformed, but this is apparently the image which Mr. Kopischke is trying to project. The NFB has been somewhat surprised by and critical of the fact that Nebraska's library for the blind does not have a single staff member who knows Braille; but Braille, like understanding and commitment, must be learned and does not automatically come with the physical fact of blindness.

"Kopischke correctly reports that a legislative committee undertook an 'interim study' of the question of transfer. He incorrectly reports, however, that, 'The result: the legislative committee that conducted an eight-month investigation into NFB complaints decided that the state library was the best agency for the job and most complaints were unfounded.' The report of the committee, issued December 13, 1976, contains not a single reference to NFB complaints, let alone stating that they were unfounded; and the only reference to any agency being the best location for the service is the remark that, 'The committee also toured both the Iowa and Nebraska facilities, and observed that the Nebraska facility does not approach the Iowa facility in either resource availability or federal funds secured.' In Iowa, the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped is part of the Commission for the Blind.

"Finally, it is stated that, 'The Federation had attempted to discredit the Nebraska state library' and 'that state libraries

elsewhere (Washington and Montana were two states mentioned) as well as LC are being assailed by the NFB.' 'Discredit' and 'assailed' appear to be words deliberately chosen to convey the impression of a violent, military assault after a campaign of propaganda. By this choice of imagery, Mr. Kopischke seems to be warning librarians across the country that the National Federation of the Blind, the largest organization of consumers of this type of library service, is intent only on destruction and that therefore the only appropriate response to them is a defensive posture and certainly not a reasonable discussion of the issues. This notion is spurious and its adoption would be the greatest disservice that librarians could deliver to their patrons.

"Respectfully,

"BARBARA BEACH,  
"President, NFB of Nebraska."

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Mr. Kopischke was sent a copy of this letter, and he has now responded by saying: "I don't believe that the news item to which you are responding was intended to be an in-depth summary of all that occurred concerning the issue, so its superficial aspect

has to be expected. The tone of the article is, I think, regrettably excessive. I hope we can get on with developing a good program for blind and physically handicapped readers in spite of all this alleged furor." But where, we ask, did *Library Journal* pick up this excessive tone? It is not believable that the magazine conducted its own investigation.

Mrs. Beach has not heard a word from *Library Journal* itself; and it is surprising that a respected professional publication should so lightly take sides in what is for the blind of Nebraska a serious matter, and then bury its head in the sand when this is pointed out. For the time being, the issue is at rest in the state: the bill has been postponed in the Legislature. Our Nebraska affiliate is a new presence in the legislative arena of that state, and law-makers have not yet come to accept the concept of the blind speaking for themselves. Yet we have gained friends among them, and a good deal of experience, and this battle will be continued until it is won. Whatever else may change in the situation, the needs of the blind for adequate library service remain the same and the National Federation of the Blind remains ready to mount the barricades to make sure those needs are filled. □

#### CONVENTION BULLETIN

The National Federation of the Blind is holding its 37th Annual Convention this summer in New Orleans, Louisiana. The time is drawing near, and reservations ought to be made right away. The first business session will convene Tuesday, July 5, but Division and committee meetings will be held before that, on Sunday and Monday. The Resolutions Committee will meet Sun-

day afternoon, and the Executive Committee will meet in open session Monday morning, the Fourth of July. Adjournment is scheduled for Friday, July 8, at 5:00 p.m. Room rates are \$10 for singles, \$14.50 for doubles. We will be housed in several hotels, but all reservation requests should be sent to the Braniff Place, 1500 Canal Street, New Orleans, Louisiana 70140. A ten-dollar

*deposit must accompany your reservation.*

The Louisiana host affiliate has arranged a number of exciting side-events (such as a Wednesday afternoon cruise on the Mississippi on a steam-wheel riverboat) but the main excitement, as always, will be the Convention sessions themselves. To quote President Jernigan: "We all need to come to New Orleans this summer and get on with our business as Federationists."

Here is a letter from Diane McGeorge, chairperson in charge of door prizes, followed by a some notes about travel and other matters:

*Greetings Fellow Federationists:*

It's time for a reminder about doorprizes for the Convention. Bring them! Now I say, "bring them," but I should qualify that statement just a trace. What I should say is, bring them, carry them, mail them, by land, air, or sea—we don't care, just be sure you bring lots and bring good ones. The only restriction we place on your prize donation is this: Please—and I cannot emphasize this too many times—*please do not* bring checks, money orders, etc. Bring all the cash you want to, preferably \$25 or more (preferably more) but be sure this is in cash. Cash is easily transported, more easily dispensed, and is always a welcome prize. Also, please remember to indicate in Braille as well as in inkprint the donor of the prize as well as the contents of the package or envelope. Everyone wants to hear their name called as a recipient of a prize, and if you will cooperate with me, I'll do my best to cooperate with you.

Mrs. Velma James in Baton Rouge has been selected to work with me in receiving

the prizes prior to the Convention. However, let's make Mrs. James' life simpler by being sure to mail the prizes to her no later than June 15. She will be going to New Orleans in advance of the Convention, so if you plan to mail your prizes, be sure to plan the mailing date so that they will reach her as early as possible. If you plan to bring your prizes with you to New Orleans, arrangements are being made for you to leave them with the properly designated persons in the Louisiana suite; but we'll have exact instructions on that for you by the time of registration.

Please mail your prizes to Mrs. Velma James, 3655 Beech Street, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70805. Don't forget to mail by June 15. See you in New Orleans!

DIANE McGEORGE.

P.S.—Oh yes, just in case anyone might be wondering, Pony plans to be in New Orleans, too: so how about some cool weather for a golden retriever who has lots of fur. You never know. If you treat him right, he might know the secret I'd like to know—how to win that \$100 every day at the Convention.

### CEIP Vacation Raffle

Again this year, the NFB Cultural Exchange and International Program Committee (CEIP) is sponsoring a vacation raffle. This year the winner will have a choice of: (1) A Hawaiian Holiday for two (this includes seven nights at the beautiful Hotel Napualoni and round-trip airfare from most major cities west of the Mississippi River and Chicago); *or* (2) A London Show Tour for two (this includes seven nights at a London hotel, four theatre tickets to a play or

musical, and round-trip airfare from Chicago or New York); or (3) \$800 in cash. The price of raffle tickets is only one dollar. The drawing will be held July 8, 1977, at the NFB Convention. The winner does not need to be present, and will be notified as soon as possible after the drawing. Last year this raffle raised over \$2,000 for the NFB treasury. We hope this year will be even better.

If you would like to purchase some of these tickets, contact a member of the CEIP Committee or send a self-addressed stamped envelope and one dollar for each ticket to: Joanne Fernandes, 1210 Second Street, Boone, Iowa 50036. If you would like to help sell these tickets, please contact Joanne Fernandes. We would very much appreciate your help.

### Travel Arrangements to New Orleans

Joseph Fernandes, a Federationist, works as a representative of Johnny's House of Travel in Des Moines, Iowa. Mr. Fernandes has pledged that he will make a donation to the NFB treasury for each ticket purchased through this travel agency. He and the agency will also work to find the cheapest and most advantageous means to travel to New Orleans, for instance, group rates and chartered flights. Also, a one-week, post-convention tour to Jamaica is being planned through the same agency, and Mr. Fernandes will make contributions to the NFB treasury for these tickets also. For more information, write to: Johnny's House of Travel, 524 Forty-second Street, Des Moines, Iowa 50312. Or call collect to: Garry Johnson, (515) 274-3807. □

## MICHIGAN CONVENTION

BY

MICHAEL PAWELKOWSKI

The 1976 convention of the National Federation of the Blind of Michigan was held the weekend of October 8-10 at the Pantlind Hotel in Grand Rapids. Activities began Friday afternoon with the meetings of the various committees. At the Friday night board meeting, Federationists joined the state board in welcoming our newly organized Blind Merchants Division. We also welcomed those Federationists who attended our convention as guests: Marc Maurer, president of the NFB Student Division and member of the NFB Board of Directors, attended the convention representing our National Office. Other visiting Federationists included Marc's wife, Pat; Sylvester and Jean Nemmers from Iowa; and Harold Snyder, Director of Programs

for the Handicapped at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C.

On Saturday morning after the opening ceremonies, the convention heard from Mr. Walter Coonan, Director of Contract Compliance for the Handicapped, Department of Labor Region V. Mr. Coonan spoke to us concerning implementation of the regulations for Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

The next topic of discussion was of particular interest to Federationists because it dealt with the blind and insurance discrimination. Discussing this with us was Mr. Tom Jones, State of Michigan Commissioner of Insurance. Mr. Jones, who knew of our

concern, informed us that in 1977 Fair Insurance Practice Regulations will call upon insurance companies to give the blind and handicapped full insurance coverage at the standard rates that apply to others. Should an insurance company choose to deny full coverage or charge higher rates, they must justify doing so for that individual case. Mr. Jones encouraged our input as consumers. He also asked us to assist him and the Commission directly in developing procedures and guidelines for the implementation of these regulations. Mr. Jones and the Insurance Commission are to be commended for not only seeking our views as consumers, but for seeking our direct assistance as well. We will begin by supplying the Insurance Commission with documentation concerning insurance discrimination against the blind.

Harold Snyder then talked to us about the museums in Michigan. He said we have much to do to make these museums gear their programs to serve the blind and handicapped as regular members of the population rather than on a segregated basis.

After the morning session had adjourned, a luncheon was held with our new Merchants Division. We can look forward to seeing meaningful representation of blind merchants through this Division. Its officers and members are enthusiastic and eager to work.

When the convention reconvened, Marc Maurer gave the report from our National Office. He told us of the accomplishments the Federation has made in the last year and reminded us of the importance of raising funds and influencing the public and our government representatives.

The Randolph-Sheppard amendments were then discussed with Neil Crowl,

Director of Business Enterprises for the Office of Services for the Blind in Michigan. We reaffirmed with Mr. Crowl our position on the training of blind vendors for employment. We explained our belief that blind vendors should be trained by those possessing the necessary skills of the trade and such training need not be conducted at a rehabilitation center.

Next we heard from two local agencies that serve the blind in Grand Rapids. These agencies were the Grand Rapids Association for the Blind, which provides teaching services, and Welcome Home for the Blind, which is a residential home for aged blind persons. These agencies gave a description of their services. We discussed our philosophy of blindness with the representatives from Welcome Home for the Blind, and we strongly urged the Grand Rapids Association for the Blind not to seek accreditation with NAC.

The next item on the agenda was to have been a discussion with the representative of the Civil Service Commission. However, shortly before the convention we were informed by the Commission that the person who had accepted the invitation had no authority to do so. Consequently, because of this "unfortunate" mistake, the Commission would not be represented at our convention. Perhaps in an effort to console us, the Commission reminded us that they provide a consumer forum through which we could make our views known. This type of tactic on the part of the Civil Service Commission has been used in the past. In order to avoid what they call "confrontation," they choose to avoid conversation with us through our consumer forum which is the convention of the National Federation of the Blind. As of today, the blind of Michigan still receive an automatic score

of 70 on a Civil Service exam regardless of their performance.

The report from our legislation committee gave us the news that we had all worked so hard for and looked forward to for so long. The Equal Rights Bill which gives the blind and physically handicapped protection in employment and in housing under the Civil Rights Commission was passed by our 1976 legislature. John Mullins and all those who worked for the bill's passage deserve our special thanks.

The Saturday night banquet, as always, was exciting and informative. Those who attended the banquet were treated with tasty samples of the new variety of Ludwig candy. President Ruby Garner presented the Charter of Affiliation to Larry Posant, newly elected president of the Merchants Division. The banquet address was delivered by Marc Maurer who gave an overview of conflicting philosophies of blindness. After the banquet there was music and dancing to round out the evening.

Sunday morning was devoted to in-house business. Chapter reports were given and resolutions were read and adopted. We also nominated members to serve on the Division of Services for the Blind Advisory Committee. The election of officers was held. John Halverson was elected president; Alan Harris, vice-president; John Mullins, second vice-president; Mary Lou Phillips, secretary; and Jim Palmer, treasurer. Since three of the officers elected had held board positions, it was necessary to elect three persons to complete these terms. The newly elected board members are: Albert Phillips from Lansing, Steve Handshu from Detroit, and Larry Posant.

Plans were then made for the 1977 convention. It was decided that the convention will be held in Detroit. All in all, 1976 was a good year for the Federation in Michigan. We have worked hard and have seen what can come from our efforts. We shall continue to move ahead in 1977. □

### FLORIDA CONVENTION

The National Federation of the Blind of Florida met in Pensacola Beach on February 4th, 5th, and 6th, in the largest and most enthusiastic convention in our history. We would like to express our gratitude to those people who played a special part in making our convention such an unforgettable experience. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Judie Welch, convention coordinator, who, along with our Gulf Coast Chapter in Pensacola, made all arrangements for publicity, accommodations, and many other details which were necessary to make a convention run as smoothly and successfully as ours;

- Ralph Sanders, our National Representative, who provided us with guidance and inspiration throughout the convention and especially at our banquet where, after his challenging and forthright speech about the state of the NFB and the role we must play in assuring the future of our organization, 12 people came forward to fill out PAC Plan cards;

- Art Segal, president of the NFB Merchants Division, who spoke to us at the Saturday morning session and helped our merchants in Florida to develop a more viable and effective division, something which is vital to the integrity and independence of the vendors of our state;

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• Euclid Rains, president of the Alabama affiliate, who was the keynote speaker at the Saturday luncheon and spoke to us of "lines" in history and the "line" that we must cross and stand firm on if we are to be good Federationists; and

• Don Wedewer, Director, Florida Office of Blind Services, who spoke at our Saturday afternoon session and brought many of his staff members to answer our questions.

Since Mr. Wedewer is president of the National Council of State Agencies for the Blind (NCSAB) and a member of the NAC Commission on Standards, his comments on a number of topics are of concern to Federationists. If readers are hoping to learn his positions on these topics, though, they had better hope again, for Mr. Wedewer is a hard man to pin down.

On the topic of consumerism, for example, Mr. Wedewer acknowledged the good effect that the NFB has had on programs in Florida and that it has taken the muscle of the blind acting in union to achieve such advances as the separate agency. He then bewailed the effects of coalitions which bury the needs of the blind beneath the needs of other, larger categories of the handicapped. But he went on, in a bewildering chain of logic, to deplore coalitions of *blind persons*, in other words, the NFB. Small, *locally* oriented groups of the blind are what Mr. Wedewer prefers to deal with. Appropriately, this part of his talk ended with an expression of the need to be flexible and able to change positions.

Portions of Mr. Wedewer's comments on NAC during the question-and-answer period following his talk deserve to be published verbatim so that Federationists can learn his stand—or rather his stands—on this. Due

to problems with the microphone, parts of some of the questions asked are missing.

Ralph Sanders: Mr. Wedewer, I understand that your agency just recently reaccredited with NAC.

Mr. Wedewer: Yes, well not reaccredited. I guess what you call it is—extended the accreditation, if that is the correct word. It was a two-year—let me see, I don't know how they put it—it was a two-year accreditation, with the possibility of continuing it if the accreditation looked all right. So it is right now up to 1979, I think.

Mr. Sanders: I'll close with simply saying this. I've heard you on other occasions say that you wanted and encouraged consumer involvement on the state level, that you believed in that as a program philosophy. To do that, you've come here today and you've brought a considerable number of your staff with you, which I think is commendable. There are states where that doesn't happen. And you've come here today and talked about ways in which you need the help of the organized blind movement. You've had that help in the recent past. Not that the organized blind movement in and of itself saved the agency; certainly the staff of the agency had a part and others had a part, but I think the role played by this affiliate cannot be discounted in that process. What I'd like to say to you is simply to appeal to you that if you really mean what you said, and you really want constructive, close involvement between you and the consumers, this street's a two-way street, and we would like for you to join us and show that you believe in it also and disinvolve yourself with the National Accreditation Council.

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After some discussion during which were mentioned the most flagrant examples of NAC's accrediting substandard agencies for political reasons, the exchange continued as follows:

Beth Bowen: What are the values of standards if you simply don't apply them?

Mr. Wedewer: Well, we apply them here. I'm not on the board or on the accreditation team. They are the ones that apply them. The Accreditation Commission is the one that has that responsibility. I have nothing to do with the Arkansas or the Minnesota one, or wherever the ones that are bad. I have not been a part of that, but I will certainly work on the standards and do my part. I don't intend to defend NAC, like I said. You can do that; I don't intend to.

Mrs. Bowen: But aren't you lending credibility to what NAC is doing?

Mr. Wedewer: What Beth says is true. She says that the fact that Florida is a pretty good-sized agency, a visible agency, and we've been accredited—that gives some credibility to NAC. Yes, I guess they deserve some credibility. I would say they deserve some.

Mrs. Bowen: Well, you are being used then, because Florida would be a good or bad agency without NAC. NAC did not make us the agency that we are.

Mr. Wedewer: No question about that. Their procedure has helped us understand it, but they didn't make our agency. I agree with that, but I think they did some good, and like I've said to you, Beth, any time your organization wants to come to the Advisory Council and lay the pressure on about accreditation, I would be willing to

see it debated there. I know some of you said, 'Well, Don, you can control the Advisory Council.' I sure do not want to.

Mrs. Bowen: But you can?

Mr. Wedewer: I sure do not want to.

Questioner: Mr. Wedewer, please state one concrete instance where NAC has done Florida some good.

Mr. Wedewer: Well, I just mentioned the self-study program, where we looked at our line of structure.

Questioner: You mean you're not honest enough to do a self-study program without somebody hanging over your head?

Mr. Wedewer: We do them all the time.

Questioner: All right then, NAC has nothing to do with that, really.

Mr. Wedewer: That particular one it did. That self-study was started, like I said, before I was running the agency, and it did us some good. I was a local person out in the field, and it did some good. . . . One more statement. I get caught between the pressures of AFB and—I think Mr. Sanders probably put it best, "There is the AFB and the NFB." And I think more and more I see warfare and some of us get caught between, you know. It gets pretty bad—the flack does—and you've got AAWB and all the rest of it. And sometimes I wonder where to duck and where to go. . . .

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Again, we would like to thank Mr. Wedewer for making his position clear to us, because, by doing so, we are now clear on what position we must take. □

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CONDITIONS GOVERNING ELIGIBILITY OF BLIND PERSONS  
TO RECEIVE DISABILITY INSURANCE  
UNDER TITLE II OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT

Eligibility for blind persons to receive disability insurance benefits under Title II of the Social Security Act is determined on a case-by-case basis. The rules tend to be complex, but here are a few simple facts:

(1) An individual who wishes to qualify for disability cash benefits on the basis of blindness must have a central visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye with the use of corrective lenses, or a visual field reduction to 20 degrees or less.

(2) To be eligible for disability insurance benefits, an individual may not engage in "substantial gainful work." To decide if the work an individual may be performing is "substantial and gainful," all pertinent facts about the job are considered—skills, experience required, responsibility, hours, productivity, and pay.

The amount of pay is perhaps the best gauge of how substantial the person's work is. As of January 1, 1976, a person earning less than an average of \$130 monthly will ordinarily be considered unable to perform substantial gainful work. A person earning more than \$200 in average monthly wages will ordinarily be considered capable of substantial gainful work. For a person earning between \$130 and \$200 in average monthly wages, a detailed review of the individual's work activities and medical evidence is made in determining whether or not the ability to engage in substantial gainful work exists. It is fair to say, though, that in most cases where a blind individual is earning less than \$200 per month, he will

be presumed unable to engage in substantial gainful work.

For blind persons age 55 but not yet age 65, somewhat different rules apply in determining if the individual is able to engage in substantial gainful work. Persons in this age group may get cash disability benefits if they are unable to perform work requiring skills or abilities comparable to the work they did regularly before they reached 55 or became blind, whichever is later.

Self-employed blind persons must also be unable to engage in substantial gainful work. This evaluation is made in a manner which differs somewhat from that of a salaried individual. All of the pertinent facts about the work are considered, but it is also recognized that business income is influenced by economic conditions, the value of unpaid services of family members, etc. More emphasis is placed on the extent of the activities performed in connection with the business and less placed on the amount of net earnings.

Blind individuals who have been receiving disability insurance may continue to receive such benefits during a trial work period. In such cases the decision as to whether a beneficiary's work is substantial and gainful is usually put off until he or she has worked in at least nine separate months, not necessarily consecutively. If, after this nine-month trial work period, it is determined that the individual is engaging in substantial gainful work, benefits will continue uninterrupted. If, on the other hand,

it is determined that the individual is engaging in substantial gainful work, benefits will be terminated three months after the nine-month trial work period. Any benefit checks received after the trial work period plus three additional months are considered to be overpayments and may be reclaimed by the Social Security Administration.

(3) To gain eligibility for disability insurance benefits, a blind person must have worked long enough under Social Security-covered employment to be fully insured. How much work depends on a person's age at the onset of blindness or at the time the individual ceases to engage in substantial gainful work. As a general rule, a blind person must have worked for one quarter for each year beginning with 1951 and ending with the year before that during which the onset of disability occurs. For those reaching age 21 after 1950, the number of quarters worked must be equal to the number of years beginning with the year following the attainment of age 21 and ending with the year before that during which the onset of disability occurs. For the purpose of making this determination, the phrase "onset of disability" refers to the point at which the individual is declared legally blind, or the point at which he or she ceases to be able to engage in substantial gainful work, whichever is later.

No blind person can be eligible for disability insurance benefits if he or she has worked less than six quarters under employment covered by Social Security. A quarter of coverage is achieved by earning \$50 during any calendar quarter. The quarters of work which may be counted may be accumulated from 1936. They need not be consecutive or recent. The work requirement for blind persons is based only on the number

of quarters which, depending on age and when the onset of disability occurred, may now range from six to twenty-five quarters.

(4) Eligibility for cash benefits from Social Security is also extended to blind persons who have not worked but qualify as dependents of persons receiving regular disability insurance benefits, persons receiving retirement benefits, or deceased persons who had obtained fully insured status under Social Security. Such dependents fall into the following categories: blind dependent widows, blind dependent widowers, blind dependent children, and dependent adults who became blind prior to age 22. The benefits paid to such dependent persons are not the regular disability benefits, but they are paid to these individuals because they are dependents of disabled, retired, or deceased workers.

While these are the general requirements governing eligibility of blind persons for disability insurance benefits under the Social Security Act, it must be borne in mind that anyone's eligibility to receive benefits from Social Security depends on various individual facts and circumstances. One might receive survivor's benefits, retirement benefits, benefits which are payable in certain cases to the disabled surviving divorced wives of workers who were insured at death, and so on. To determine your eligibility for disability insurance benefits or benefits payable from other Social Security-administered programs, get in touch with your local Social Security Office. In discussing matters related to your claim for disability insurance benefits, you should always be sure that the claims representative is aware that you are blind, since the special rules discussed here apply. □

# RECIPE OF THE MONTH

BY LOUISE GIBNEY-SNIDER

*Note: Ms. Gibney-Snider is a member of the staff of the NFB Washington Office. About this recipe she says: "Any combination of fresh vegetables and/or meat, poultry, and fish may be prepared in this manner. The secret is to slice the ingredients diagonally into strips no wider than 1/4 inch. Use a small amount of hot peanut oil, and stir and fry for no more than ten minutes combined cooking time. Vegetables which require longer cooking times should be placed in the pan first."*

## JAPANESE BEEF AND SNOWPEAS

### Ingredients

1 medium-sized steak	4 tablespoons peanut oil
1 pound fresh mushrooms	3 tablespoons soy sauce
1/2 onion	3 tablespoons red or white cooking wine
1/2 pound fresh snowpeas (or fresh or frozen green beans or broccoli sections)	

Marinate the steak in a combination of one tablespoon of oil plus the soy sauce and cooking wine.

Just prior to cooking, slice the steak into strips 1/4 inch thick.

Slice 1 pound fresh mushrooms and 1/2 onion.

Using a frying pan or a wok, heat 3 tablespoons peanut oil until a drop of water dropped into the pan will sizzle slightly. Turn the heat down a little.

Add the meat and onion to the pan. Stir and fry for 2 to 3 minutes.

Add the snowpeas and stir and fry the combination for 1 to 2 minutes.

Add the mushrooms and the marinade and cook until mushrooms are softened (about 3 to 4 minutes).

Serve with boiled white rice and hot tea. Serves 4 to 6. □

## MONITOR MINIATURES

The March-April issue of the *Monitor* was the last one to be mailed out in Braille to our regular subscribers. The Braille edition of the magazine will continue to be published each month (or as often as the magazine is published), but only a few copies will be produced. These will be sent to deaf-blind members and a few others who have a similarly compelling reason for using Braille. This had to be done because the Braille edition is many times more expensive than either of the other editions. The February

Braille edition contained a letter from President Jernigan announcing this change and asking those who had to continue receiving Braille to write and give the reason.

If you need to stay on the list for the Braille edition, write at once to: *Braille Monitor* Renewal, 218 Randolph Hotel Building, Des Moines, Iowa 50309. If you want to change your subscription to talking book or inkprint, send this request (no reasons are needed) to the same address.

There has been one other change. Don McConnell, the *Monitor* editor, has moved to the Washington Office of the Federation. Therefore, anything dealing with the contents of the *Monitor* should be sent to him in Washington, at: 212 Dupont Circle Building, 1346 Connecticut Avenue Northwest, Washington, D.C. 20036. But anything to do with subscriptions, addresses, requests for back issues or any other NFB materials should still go to the National Office in Des Moines.

We need more recipes! If you feel that we only print recipes by the national staff or members of the Des Moines chapter, that is because these are the people who have responded. Send us your favorite recipe. If it is not your own invention, that is all right so long as you don't send one taken from a copyrighted cookbook. Send the name of the chapter you belong to (or whatever your connection to the movement is) and any comment you'd like to include. Can blind people cook? Why else would we include recipes in the magazine of the blind.

If the Federation or individual members are featured in newspaper articles, please send a copy of the story (including the name of the paper and the date of the issue) to the editor. We will try to mention these in the *Monitor*, but at least we will have them on file and on record. Also, notes about chapter activities are welcome and will be included in the magazine when possible. This applies to notes of upcoming state conventions, but of course these must arrive early enough to be still relevant. The same is true of convention reports which now tend to reach the editor many months after the convention has taken place.

\* \* \* \* \*

As noted elsewhere in this issue, the Social Security Disability Insurance for the Blind bill has now been introduced in both the House of Representatives and the Senate in the 95th Congress. Representative James A. Burke of Massachusetts (chairman of the Social Security Subcommittee of the Committee on Ways and Means) continues to be the bill's leading proponent in the House, where he has introduced this measure once again, as H.R. 3049. As we go to press, 27 other Members of the House have introduced bills identical to H.R. 3049. All Members of the House should be encouraged to show their support for the Disability Insurance for the Blind bill by introducing identical bills.

In the Senate, Senators Hubert Humphrey and Birch Bayh jointly introduced the Disability Insurance for the Blind bill as S. 753. Three Senators had already co-sponsored as we went to press. A fourth, Senator Carl Curtis (ranking Republican on the Senate Finance Committee), has introduced an identical bill, S. 861. All Members of the Senate should be urged to contact Senator Humphrey, Senator Bayh, or Senator Curtis and request that they be added as co-sponsors either to S. 753 introduced by Senators Humphrey and Bayh, or S. 861 introduced by Senator Curtis.

The supporters of improved Disability Insurance for the Blind are rallying once again. Social Security programs will be coming under serious review in the 95th Congress. Legislative action is predicted, so the blind must be heard. Watch the next and future issues of the *Monitor* for more details.

\* \* \* \* \*

We have the sad duty to announce the deaths of two long-time Federationists,

Bertrand J. Becker of Kentucky and Clifford Troll of Minnesota. A native of Louisville, Kentucky, Bert Becker was a charter member of the Kentucky Federation of the Blind and very active in the affiliate until his health failed a few years ago. He suffered a stroke in December of last year and died a month later.

Clifford Troll died February 25, 1977, after a long illness. About him, Carl Larson writes: "Clifford Troll was a charter member of the United Blind of Minnesota, a member of our Legislative Committee for many years, a life-time solicitor for the United Blind, a member who attended many National Conventions, a good faithful member. He will be sadly missed by many of us of the United Blind."

\* \* \* \* \*

Mary Jane Fry, secretary of the NFB of Rhode Island, writes as follows: "The NFB of Rhode Island has voted to increase membership dues from \$1 per year to \$3 per year. Out of each \$3 payment, \$1.50 will be sent to the NFB national treasury. It is hoped that our effort to assist the national organization will encourage other states to do the same."

\* \* \* \* \*

On February 2, 1977, the National Federation of the Blind of Virginia, Tidewater Chapter, was formed. We are pleased to announce that this chapter already has a membership of 12 persons and has elected the following officers: Dawnelle Cruze, president; Katie Heckman, vice-president; Sue Nichols, secretary; Willard Nichols, treasurer; Sherry Hatfield and Marcia DeRuntz, board members. We are anticipating that this small beginning will blossom and that

the lives of many blind persons in the Tidewater Virginia area will be touched by this new chapter.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Silvergate Chapter of the NFB of California is now selling a cookbook as a fundraising activity. The book consists of 58 recipes. Although the emphasis has been placed on main-course recipes—meat pies, casseroles, and skillet dinners—there are also vegetable dishes, salads, breads, and desserts. "The Silvergate Collection, Volume One" is available in Braille or large print at \$5.25 a copy (for either edition). Braille copies are printed in plastic, large print in 24-point type. Please add 25 cents for handling. Check or money order must accompany all orders. Books will be sent immediately upon receipt of orders. Be sure to specify Braille or large print. Send orders and money to: Elena Horwedel, 12116 Wintergreen Drive, Unit 2, Lakeside, California 92040.

\* \* \* \* \*

Braille, Incorporated, is searching for certified proofreaders who are willing to work professionally at home on a fee basis. Details and a short test will be sent upon request. Their address is: Braille, Inc., 44 Scranton Avenue, Falmouth, Massachusetts 02540.

\* \* \* \* \*

From Federationist Steve Machalow comes the following amazing item:

"During the Iowa Commission for the Blind Orientation Center's Christmas Party a staff member and long-time Federationist, Revanne Duckett, received a rather unusual gift. Several weeks before the party Revanne

had been overheard reading students a spoof from the *New Outlook for the Blind* concerning the use of pigs and ducks as guides for rural travel. You guessed it: during the party Santa gave Revanne a large box. Upon opening it she described its contents as warm, fluffy, and alive! It was a duck.

"After the initial shock had worn off, Revanne asked students for help in naming her new companion. The duck was soon christened "Uncle Bob"—what better name for a "seeing-eye duck"? Several days later Revanne was given a "Step by Step Guide for the Care and Management of Ducks for Those Inclined To Keep Them as House Pets." "Uncle Bob" is now living happily in Revanne's basement, sharing the shower with all the other "ducketts."

\* \* \* \* \*

"Success Motivation Cassette Tapes," a series of condensed, self-help books, are now available through tape-of-the-month programs. Details about these tapes will be sent upon request (in inkprint, cassette, or Braille). The suggested first selection is *Psycho-Cybernetics* by Dr. Maxwell Maltz. Tapes cost \$9.95 per book. For more information, write: Langdon Distributors, 7710 East Farmdale, Mesa, Arizona 85208.

\* \* \* \* \*

Here is a letter to blind psychologists from Dr. Mari Bull of 219 North Indian Hill Boulevard, Suite 102, Claremont, California 91711. She writes as follows:

"DEAR COLLEAGUE: I am one of a group of blind psychologists and volunteer readers who are in the process of establishing an organization to tape-record professional journals for blind psychologists. We hope

to be able to record any journal that is requested. Though our material will be recorded in the homes of our readers, we will train them carefully and choose those who can read aloud easily and rapidly.

"If you are interested in our service, please contact me. I want any comments you have to offer. I am especially interested in answers to the following questions: What journals would you be interested in receiving? Do you pay now to have journals read to you; and if so, how much? Would you be willing to pay twice as much for the recorded journal as you currently pay for the print subscription? Would you want to keep the tapes? Do you have an APH-adapted Sony open-reel recorder? an APH-adapted cassette recorder? Do you want journals on cassettes or open reels? If we can get a tax-exempt status in California, would you donate \$25 to a fund to purchase and maintain recording equipment? Would you want to join an organization of blind psychologists? If so, what would you hope to get from such an organization? If you know of any other blind psychologists, please ask them to contact me."

\* \* \* \* \*

The following announcement and short convention report comes to us from Frank Snee, president of the NFB of New Hampshire:

"The NFB of New Hampshire will hold its state convention on September 24 and 25, 1977. It will take place at the Howard Johnson Motor Lodge, Queen City Avenue, Manchester, New Hampshire (Exit 11 on the Everett Turnpike). Since Dr. Kenneth Jernigan plans to be with us this year, we wish to extend an invitation to all our friends in the NFB from as far off as they are willing to come to be with us.

"All lodging and banquet reservations must be mailed directly to Frank Snee, 321 Merrimack Street, Manchester, New Hampshire 03103. Do get in early as it will be first come, first served. Room rates are \$23 for singles, \$26 for doubles, \$29 for twin bed rooms, \$3 for roll-away cot. Banquet tickets are \$8 and registration \$2. Be specific in your letters as to what you are reserving. Please write "convention" on the bottom left corner of the envelope. The program will begin Saturday morning, but we hope to hold a reception Friday night for Dr. Jernigan.

"Our last convention was in September 1976, and we had the pleasure of having with us Mr. Jim Omvig, representing the NFB. His entire presentation and his fine banquet address were enjoyed by all. Also with us at that time were the following: Bruce Archambeau, Chief of the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation of the State Department of Education; Jules Cote, Director of the Bureau of Services for the Blind; and nearly all the staff of the Bureau of Services for the Blind. All of them gave excellent reports of their phases of the programs as they relate to the blind. The general welfare of the blind is improving in New Hampshire. The banquet session closed with the presentation of the Henry J. VanVliet Memorial Award to Ed Vachon for his work on behalf of the blind of New Hampshire. The elections on Sunday produced the following results: Frank Snee, president; Francis Lamontagne, first vice-president; Franklin VanVliet, second vice-president; Edmond Meskys, secretary; Mrs. Annette Lamontagne, treasurer; and board members, Mrs. Theresa Herron and Mr. Ed Vachon."

\* \* \* \* \*

The American Foundation for Overseas Blind (the international branch of the AFB) has announced a change of name. The organization is now titled Helen Keller International, Incorporated (HKI). Its address is the same as its predecessor's: 22 West 17th Street, New York, New York 10011.

\* \* \* \* \*

Andrew P. Virden, of Waite Park, Minnesota, received the Service to Mankind Award of the Sertoma Club of St. Cloud, on January 27th. A news story about the award said, in part: "Virden, who was born blind, is the owner and operator of Virden's Vending Service. He has operated this business for 20 years and has been ranked number eight among 70 such establishments owned and operated by the blind of the state of Minnesota. . . . He is a member of the National Federation of the Blind and the [NFB of Minnesota]. In 1975 he was recognized as the Highest Outstanding Member of the [NFB of Minnesota] for his dedication and service. Virden was president of the Waite Park Booster's Club from 1969 to 1974. Under his leadership interest was expressed in a sports center and the Waite Park Sports Park was created. He has begun his second full term as a member of the Board of Directors of the United Way Campaign. He was a member of the Governor's Commission for the Handicapped for several years."

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The following note comes from Rita Chernow, president of the NFB of New York State, who writes as follows:

"This letter brings with it a deep feeling of fulfillment and happiness and an equal degree of sadness and nostalgia. Due to a

change in my job status, it will be necessary for me to resign as president of the NFB of New York State effective March 13, 1977. Mr. Sterling France, our first vice-president, will assume the duties of the presidency, and I will assist him in every way possible to make the transition a smooth and successful one.

"Recently, the New York State Department of Labor granted me a substantial provisional promotion. . . . Receiving this promotion, no doubt, has been a joyous occasion. Noteworthy, however, and perhaps even more important than the promotion itself, is the way in which it was received. There was no hassle, no frustration, no discrimination, and no question as to whether or not a blind person could perform the supervisory duties involved. One must sit back and wonder if it could be the fine work of the Federation [that is] responsible for the more frequent increase of such occurrences."

\* \* \* \* \*

The Social Security Administration has, at long last, announced a liberalization of its "deeming policy" used in the SSI program. Liberalizing the deeming policy has been an objective of the Federation from the beginning of the SSI program in 1974. While the changes do not go as far as Federation proposals adopted in Convention resolutions and transmitted to the Social Security Administration, the new "deeming" rules will mean increased benefits for couples containing an eligible and an ineligible spouse.

Under the new rules, effective January 18, 1977, when an eligible SSI recipient lives with his or her ineligible spouse, the income of either or both is combined and

the two are treated as an eligible couple for purposes of figuring the amount of SSI benefits payable to the eligible SSI recipient. To calculate the amount of SSI benefits payable to the eligible spouse, the "countable income" of the couple must be figured. To determine the couple's countable income, subtract the first \$20 of unearned or earned income from the couple's combined income; subtract the next \$65 of the couple's combined earned income; divide the remaining combined earned income in half, and then subtract any additional income disregards (such as work expenses for the blind). The figure which this process yields is the couple's "countable income," and it must be subtracted from the full federal SSI monthly benefit amount payable to eligible couples. If, after subtracting the couple's countable income from the SSI monthly benefit payable to couples (\$251.80), the resulting dollar figure is less than the full federal SSI monthly benefit amount payable to individuals (presently \$167.80 per month), the eligible spouse will receive the lesser amount. If this subtraction yields a figure greater than the individual SSI monthly rate of \$167.80, the eligible spouse will receive \$167.80. It should be added that if after subtracting the couple's countable income from the monthly federal SSI benefit payable to couples, the resulting figure is \$83.90 or under, no income of the ineligible spouse is deemed to the eligible spouse, and he or she will thus be entitled to receive the amount payable to an eligible individual.

There are obviously many more qualifications and ramifications which may develop when these general procedures are applied to any individual case—for example, the number of children (if any) must be considered. Also, the rules and/or the above-



quoted dollar amounts may vary from state to state, since some states had more liberal deeming rules prior to the SSI program, and since some states add a supplement to the federal SSI payment amount. The point is that at long last we have achieved some modest relaxation of Social Security's rather severe deeming rules.

\* \* \* \* \*

The article "Clovernook: A Study in Custodialism," which appeared in the March-April issue of the *Monitor*, was reprinted almost in full in the Cincinnati *Post* of March 15, 1977. The top half of the editorial page was devoted to the reprint, the only

major omission being the Paul Dressell letter to Clovernook Director Gerald Mundy which ends the article. Mr. Mundy was offered space by the paper in which to reply, but as we go to press a week has passed and he has not done so. It seems likely he will not. He has not responded to any of the other attempts to bring his attention to the stifling custodialism practiced at the Clovernook Home and School for the Blind. Still, public exposure such as this chips away at the ivory tower and the administration of Clovernook may yet be brought to accept new attitudes about the rehabilitation of the blind and more enlightened ideas of their capacities. □

The deadline for articles to be printed in the June *Monitor* is April 10th.

*Instructions for the PAC Plan are on page 172 •*

#### NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND PRE-AUTHORIZED CHECK PLAN

For my benefit and convenience, I hereby request and authorize the National Federation of the Blind to draw a check in the amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_ on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of each month payable to its own order. This authorization will remain in effect until revoked by me in writing and until such notice is actually received.

Please include a voided check with your PAC card. The PAC card must be signed in two places, where the X's are. Please enclose the voided check along with your PAC card and mail to: Richard Edlund, Treasurer, National Federation of the Blind, Box 11185, Kansas City, Kansas 66111.

X

Bank signature of donor (both signatures if two are necessary)

Address

#### AUTHORIZATION TO HONOR CHECKS DRAWN BY NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND

We understand that your bank has agreed to cooperate in our Pre-Authorized Check Plan on behalf of your depositor. Attached is your client's signed authorization to honor such checks drawn by us.

Customer's account and your bank transit numbers will be MICR printed on checks, per usual specifications, before they are deposited.

Our Indemnification Agreement is on the reverse side of the signed authorization.

Name of depositor  
as shown on Bank  
records \_\_\_\_\_

Acct. # \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Bank and Branch Name, if any,  
and address of bank or branch where  
account is maintained \_\_\_\_\_

For my benefit and convenience, I hereby request and authorize you to pay and charge to my account checks drawn on my account by the National Federation of the Blind to its own order. This authorization will remain in effect until revoked by me in writing and until you actually receive such notice I agree that you shall be fully protected in honoring any such check.

In consideration of your compliance with such request and authorization, I agree that your treatment of each check, and your rights in respect to it shall be the same as if it were signed personally by me and that if any such check be dishonored, whether with or without cause, you shall be under no liability whatsoever.

The National Federation of the Blind is instructed to forward this authorization to you.

X

Date

Bank signature of customer (both signatures if two are necessary)

**THE PRE-AUTHORIZED CHECK PLAN**

The Pre-Authorized Check Plan (PAC) is a way for you to contribute a set amount each month to the NFB without the trouble of writing and mailing a check. The amount you pledge will be drawn from your account automatically. The bottom of this page is a PAC Plan card. To join the plan:

(1) On the upper portion of the PAC Plan card, fill in the amount you can send each month, and fill in the day of the month you want the money to be drawn from your account.

(2) Put your signature and the date on both the upper and lower portions of the

PAC Plan card where there is an "X." All other spaces on the card can be filled in by the NFB Treasurer.

(3) Write "void" on one of your own unused checks and attach it to the PAC Plan card. Mail the card (both parts) with the voided check to: Richard Edlund, Treasurer, National Federation of the Blind, Box 11185, Kansas City, Kansas 66111.

Your bank will send you receipts for your contributions with your regular bank statements. You can increase (or decrease) your monthly payments by filling out a new PAC Plan card and mailing it to the Treasurer. Also, more PAC Plan cards are available from the Treasurer. □

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND  
PRE-AUTHORIZED CHECK PLAN  
(back of PAC card)

**INDEMNIFICATION AGREEMENT**

TO: Bank named on the reverse side

In consideration of your compliance with the request and authorization of the depositor named on the reverse side

**THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND**

1. It will refund to you any amount erroneously paid by you to The National Federation of the Blind on any such check if claim for the amount of such erroneous payment is made by you within twelve months from the date of the check on which such erroneous payment was made.

Authorized in a resolution adopted by the Board Members of the National Federation of the Blind on November 28, 1974.

THE NATIONAL FEDERATION  
OF THE BLIND

BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
Treasurer



THE BRAILLE MONITOR  
218 RANDOLPH HOTEL BLDG.  
DES MOINES, IOWA 50309

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